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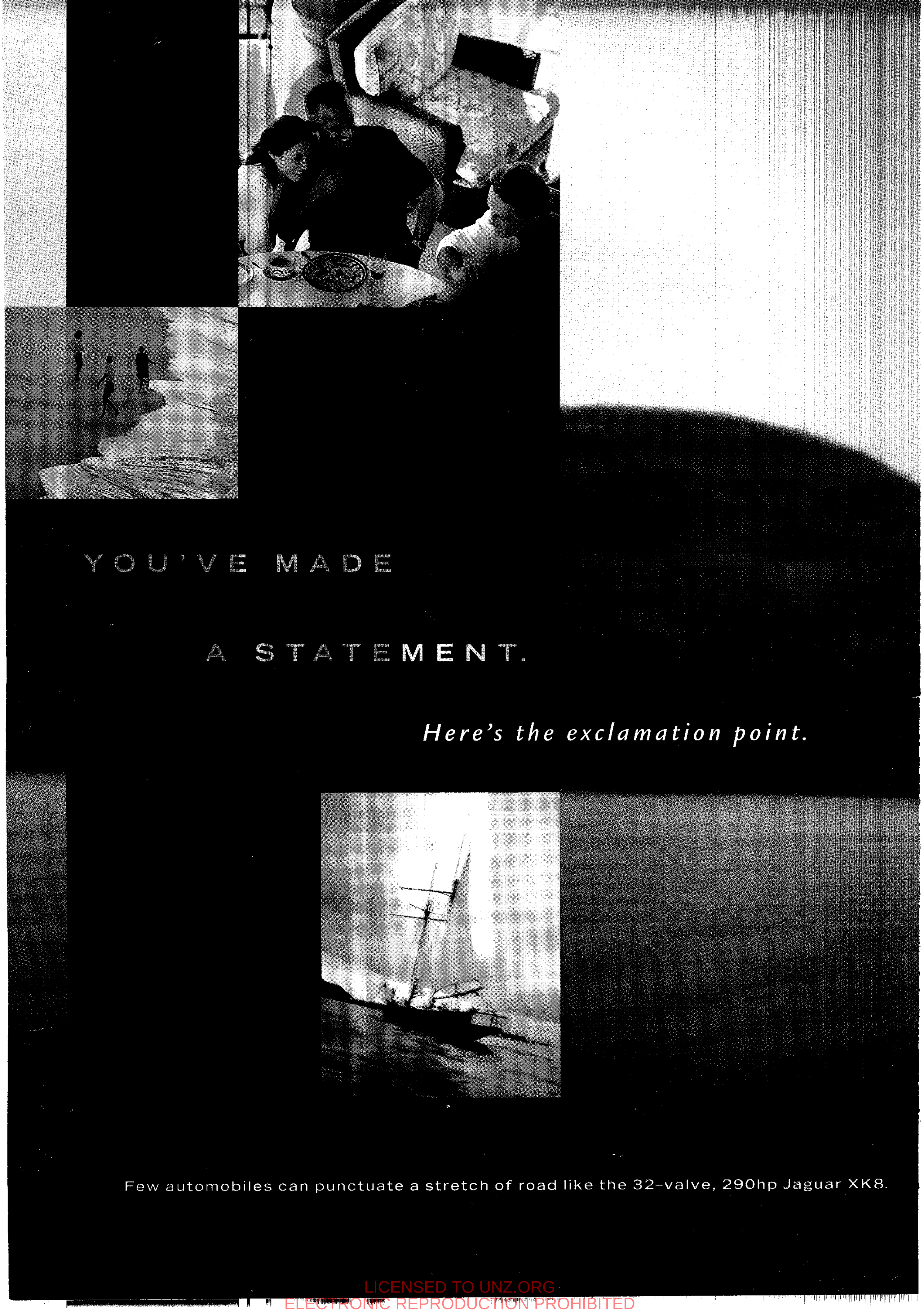
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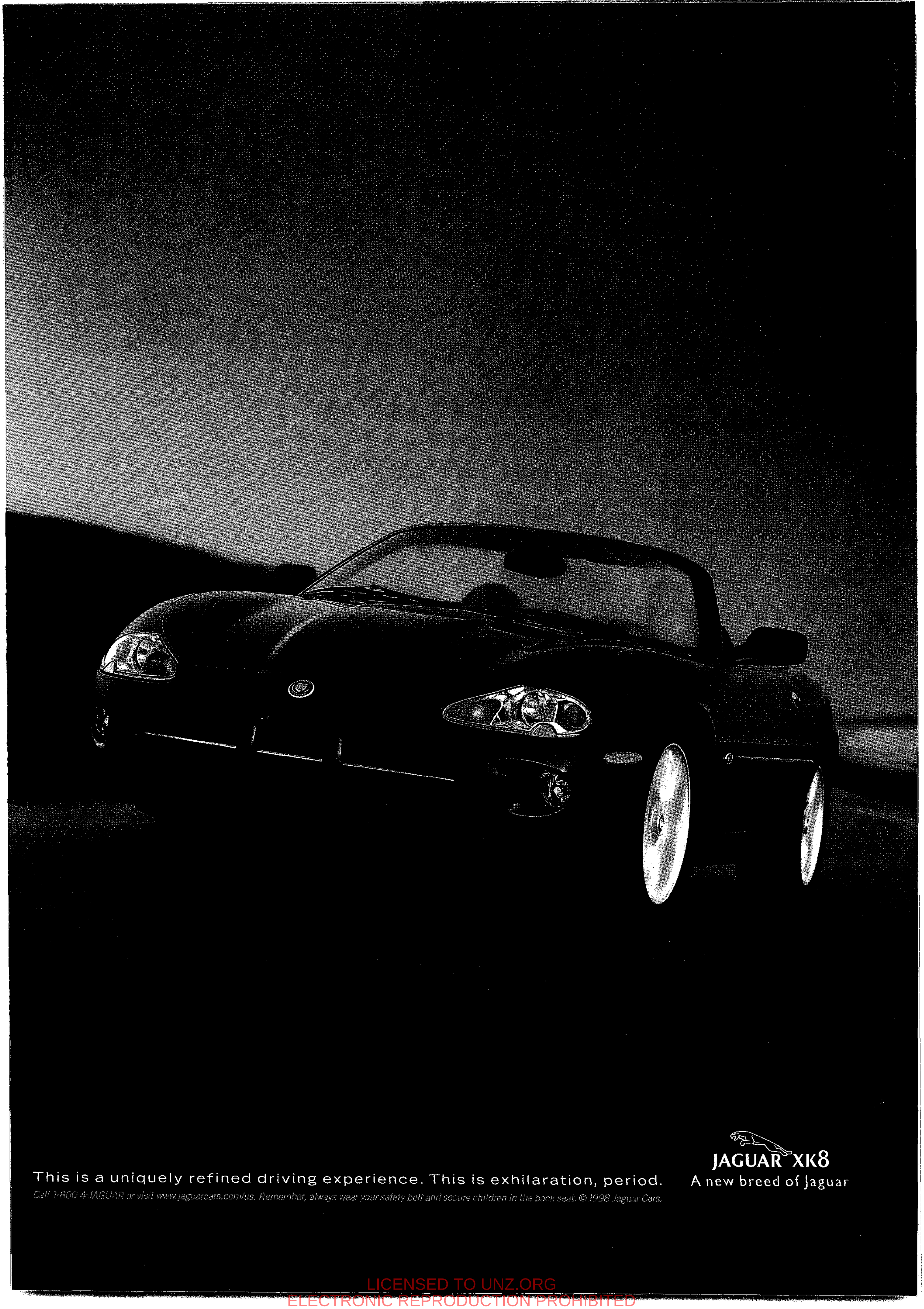

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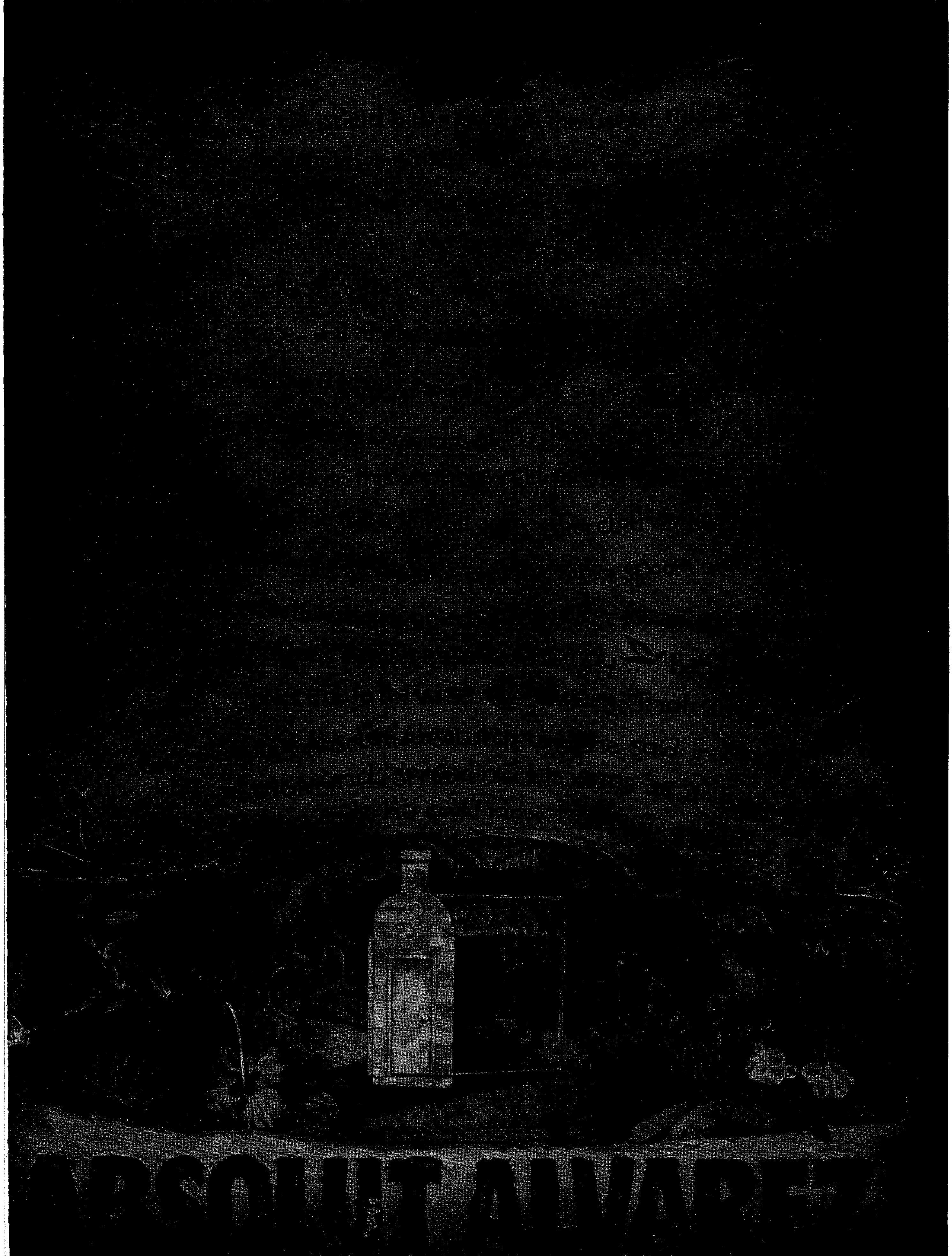

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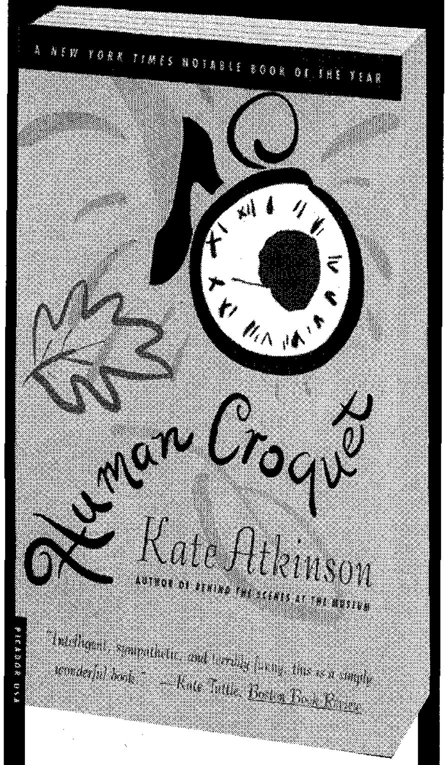
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COMMENT

LOVE THAT BOMB

It's not just the Indians who fetishize nukes.

IN the American hierarchy of things that kill people, bombs have never had much moral cachet. There is no National Bomb Association dedicated to the inalienable right of hunters to off Bambi's mom with, say, fragmentation grenades. Even in the shrillest debates on Capitol Hill, no freshman Republican has ever got up to declare that "bombs don't kill people, people do." In the movies, it's the bad guy who plants the bomb in the good guy's car; the good guy uses a .44 Magnum. When it comes to how we think about blowing each other away, there is an unspoken assumption that the kind of weapon you point is nobler than the kind you wire up to an alarm clock. A similar ordering obtains on the level of international relations. "Weapons of mass destruction"—poison gas, germ-warfare agents, and, above all, nuclear bombs and missiles—are bad. Guns are, if not exactly good, the backbone of one of America's most profitable export businesses.

Such distinctions have little to do with how deadly guns and bombs have proved to be in real life. On that score, firearms, which claimed tens of thousands of American lives last year, win hands down. In most states, they can be bought almost as easily as toaster ovens. (We will ban cigarettes long before we will ban handguns.) But a bomb is something that evil geniuses like the Unabomber use. Bombs have elaborate detonators and timing devices, and must be defused by experts. Guns are dumb; bombs are brainy (and nuclear bombs are the brainiest of all). Imagine if, last week, India had conducted provocative military maneuvers along the Pakistani border, or had started infiltrating commandos across it, or, for that matter, had merely continued along the pugnacious path that the new government there had publicly charted. None of those conventionally bellicose acts would have turned India into International Public Enemy No. 1.

This is not to minimize or excuse what India has done in conducting the underground nuclear tests that disturbed the world's peace last week. Nuclear weapons have always received special consideration, for very good and very obvious reasons, and the fact that not one has been fired in anger since the Second World War is among the greatest successes of modern diplomacy. That India has chosen to flaunt its sinister expertise in this area is rightly a cause for indignation: India has trig-

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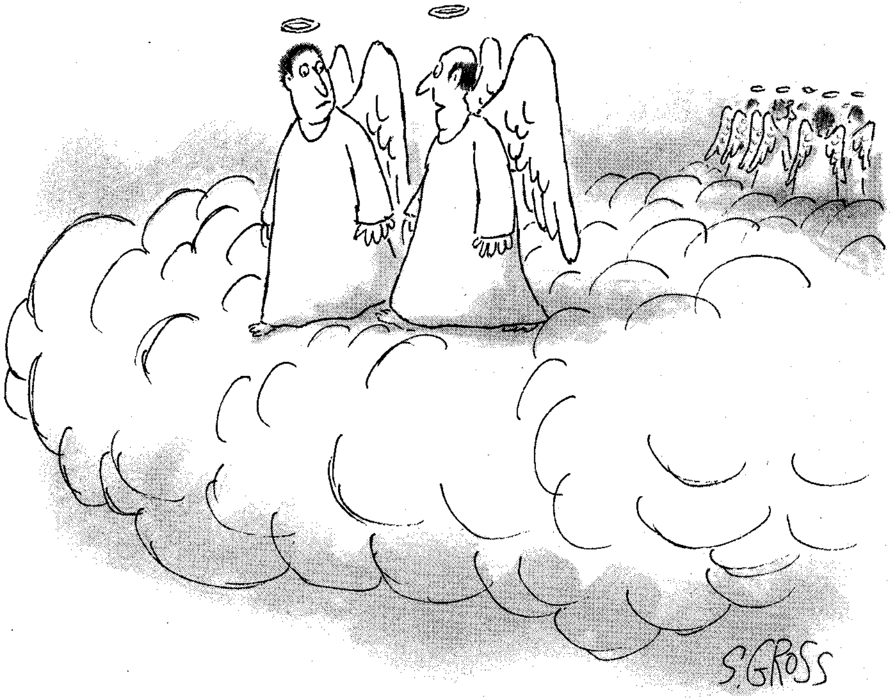
gered an arms race on the Asian subcontinent; it has further destabilized an already unstable region. The imposition of sanctions is entirely justified. Still, it is worth asking why this particular act—among the infinite variety of nasty things that countries do to one another and to their own citizens—is treated as uniquely outrageous. For if there is a lesson to be learned from the last fifty years—from what has been done by Hitler, Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, the Rwandans, and the Bosnians, among others—it is that human beings don't need weapons of mass destruction in order to engage in mass destruction. Human ingenuity and human depravity are such that guns and machetes will do. It is true that with a bomb you can kill people faster and more emphatically. But here we risk reënacting, on the international stage, the inanity of our domestic things-that-kill-people hierarchy. Pol Pot, instead of shooting and starving millions of his countrymen in the course of several years, could presumably have herded them together and detonated a small nuclear device in their midst. That the former genocidal act did not compel us to action but the latter most assuredly would have is not evidence of moral seriousness on our part. It is evidence of moral myopia.

The Indians are not the only ones to fetishize the bomb. A decade after the fading of the Cold War, the United States and Russia continue to maintain arsenals of tens of thousands of atomic and hydrogen bombs, for what purpose no one can say—unless it is to serve some sort of vague national prestige. To the Indians, this action, or inaction, evidently speaks louder than all our anti-proliferation words.

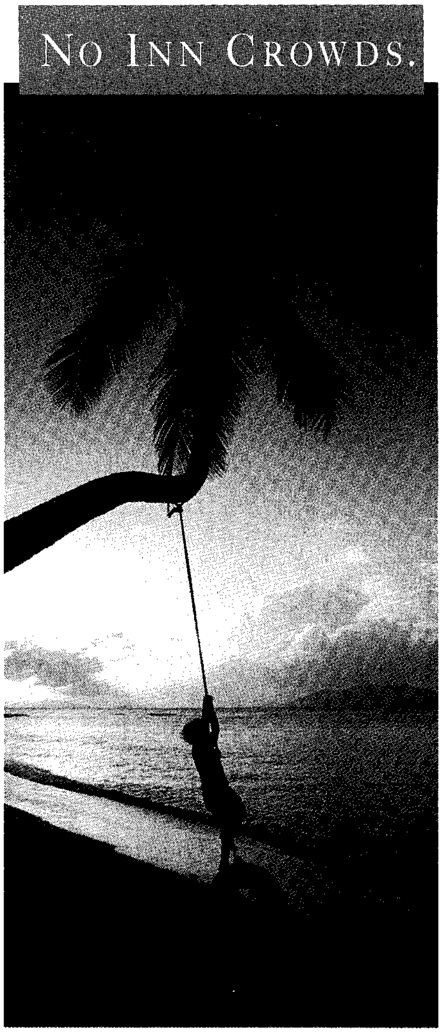
No wonder the announcement of the tests last week was greeted with euphoria by so many Indians. To them, the bomb is a way of earning respect—a salve for what President Clinton quickly diagnosed as their belief that "they have been underappreciated in the world." Clinton spoke of India as a school principal might speak of a troubled but promising adolescent suffering from low self-esteem. If this was diplomacy as guidance counselling, it was nonetheless a shrewd insight.

It is important that India be firmly divested of the nuclear illusion, but it is equally important that we divest ourselves of it as well. The bomb fetish is a James Bondish fantasy. It is also an embodiment of the high-modernist creed that form—in this case, the mastery of the scientific—carries automatic moral weight. And it is this creed that has led us to channel our indignation disproportionately into those instances in which evil meets a predetermined set of technical criteria. To the victims of mass slaughter, the distinction is without a difference. —MALCOLM GLADWELL



"That's the first time I've heard 'My Way' played on a harp."

SAM GROSS, REPRINTED FROM THE NEW YORKER 2/20 & 2/27/95



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CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES ATLAS ("The Art of Failing," p. 67) is a staff writer for this magazine. His books include "Battle of the Books: What It Takes to be Educated in America" and a forthcoming biography of Saul Bellow.

KEN AULETTA ("The Don," p. 50) is the media columnist for *The New Yorker*. His most recent article, "In the Company of Women," about female communications executives, appeared in April. His seventh book, "The Highwaymen," came out last year.

GILES SMITH ("War Games," p. 74) is the author of "Lost in Music," a memoir. His profile of Stevie Wonder was published in this magazine in 1995. He lives in London.

FRANÇOIS-MARIE BANIER (Portfolio, p. 96) is a writer and photographer whose pictures have been exhibited in the Musée National d'Art Moderne-Centre Georges Pompidou, in Paris.

DAVID REMNICK ("The Outsider," p. 80) is a staff writer for *The New Yorker*. He is the author of three books, including "Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia," coming out in paperback this spring.

SIMON SCHAMA (The Art World, p. 112) is an art critic for *The New Yorker* and a University Professor of art history and history at Columbia University. His most recent article, "Head Honcho," about the artist Chuck Close, was published in March.

MALCOLM GLADWELL (Comment, p. 4) has been a staff writer for this magazine since 1996. He is working on his first book, "The Tipping Point," a study of social epidemics. ♦

THE MAIL

WOMEN AT WORK

As Ken Auletta notes, the addition of women to a previously all-male environment can indeed have a beneficial effect, in both the quality of communication and the tone of the environment ("In the Company of Women," April 20th). I noticed this in 1979, when I was serving aboard a U.S. Coast Guard cutter and a small complement of women was added to our crew. For a dozen years after the service, however, I worked as a legal word processor, and I found myself one of a tiny minority of men in a woman-dominated field. Based on this experience I can now attest that women can be as hostile, destructive, and aggressive as any man in the workplace. A woman, particularly one who is insecure or a marginal performer, will attack and seek to neutralize a potential threat; the difference is that women seem to do this by a process of exclusion, not confrontation or intimidation. This strategy can be devastatingly effective—all the more so when coupled with the enhanced communication skills and alliance-building ability so lauded (and laudable) in women.

A better gender balance in management will be of great benefit to the workplace, to business, and to the country as a whole, but this shift is not going to be as easy as several articles I've read recently seem to imply. There are significant differences in the ways that men and women contend with conflict or even promote it, and it will take some time for all involved to adjust to them.

JEFFREY D. KOPP
Milwaukie, Ore.

Laura Ziskin, the president of Fox 2000, described to Ken Auletta a situation in which a deal was held up because a man insisted on waiting for another man to return his call, instead of calling him again. Ziskin said, "As women, if you want to get something done you call the guy until you get him," adding, "With men, everything is a contest, a battle. Women are mediators." Well, as an educable man, next time a woman I call doesn't call back I'll do things the nonaggressive way: I'll call and call and call until, darn it, she talks to me. Or tells me to bug off. Or gets a restraining order.

RICHARD D. ERLICH
Oxford, Ohio

THE ART OF CONDUCTING

Alex Ross's article about the Russian conductor Valery Gergiev ("The Maestro of Midnight," April 20th) mentioned my father, Nicolai Malko, who taught one of Gergiev's teachers in St. Petersburg. I remember watching my father conduct when I was still a boy and he was already in his sixties, and being aware even at that age of how truly strange a performance art conducting is. What is left for me when I think back on my father's concerts is the memory of a final note or chord resonating in the hall, and then a split second of purest silence before the applause would start. I miss many things profoundly, but I miss most that moment of silence, when I felt the truest confirmation of whatever had intensely linked my father to the instrument that had just performed—the orchestra.

GEORGE MALKO
New York City

ARIANNA'S SECRET POWERS

Margaret Talbot writes that Arianna Huffington has become funny lately ("The Politics of Fame," April 13th). But we knew she was funny twenty years ago, when we included her piece "My Next Lover" in our book "Titters." In the piece, Arianna not only made people laugh but also demonstrated psychic abilities. Her next lover, she wrote, would have "the sparkle of David Eisenhower" and "the intellect of Britt Ekland." Years later, she married Michael Huffington.

DEANNE STILLMAN AND ANNE BEATTS
Los Angeles, Calif.

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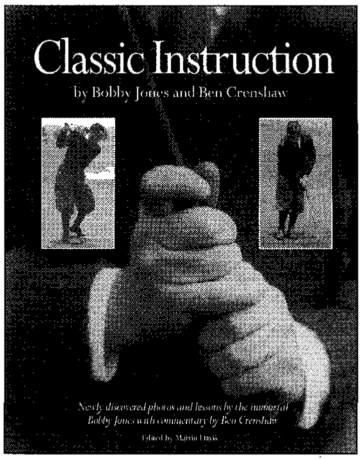

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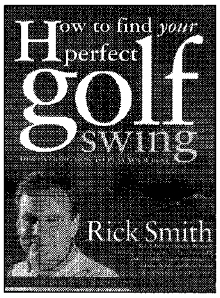

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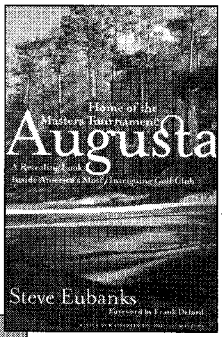

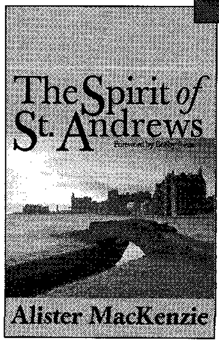

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Chicas 2000—An encore staging of Carmelita Tropicana's comedy about love in the age of genetic remodelling, in which she finds herself in the slammer for murdering a man who cloned cells from her derrière. Previews begin May 20. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

City Water Tunnel #3—Marty Pottenger's one-woman multimedia show takes the audience eight stories underground to examine the lives of laborers involved in New York's ongoing project, begun in 1970, to add another water-delivery route to its system. Previews begin May 21. (Judith Anderson, 424 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—Series B of this year's six-week marathon of one-acts begins May 20, with plays by Shel Silverstein, Elizabeth Diggs, Prince Gomolvilas, and Jennifer Mattern. The second series runs through May 31. The marathon continues through June 14. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982.)

Labor Day—A. R. Gurney has revived a character from "The Cocktail Hour" for this semiautobiographical comedy, about a playwright who tries to revise his latest work during a family holiday. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Nasty Little Secrets—A revised version of Lanie Robertson's play about the life and death of the playwright Joe Orton. Opens May 20 at 8. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

A New Brain—Malcolm Gets portrays a songwriter awaiting surgery, in a new musical by William Finn ("Falsettos") and James Lapine. Graciela Daniele is the director. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Once in a Lifetime—An Atlantic Theatre Company revival of the 1930 Kaufman and Hart satire—the playwriting team's first collaboration. David Pittu is the director. In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 645-1242.)

Power Plays—Three one-act comedies written by and starring Elaine May and Alan Arkin, who are joined by Anthony Arkin and Jeannie Berlin. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. Two previews on May 20. Opens May 21 at 8. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

The Royal Shakespeare Company—Presenting a two-week, five-play residency at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. May 21-22 at 7:30, May 23 at 2 and 7:30, and May 24 at 3: "Hamlet," directed by Matthew Warchus. Through May 30. (30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.) . . . ¶ May 26 at 7:30: "Henry VIII," directed by Gregory Doran. Through May 31. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St.)

The Sea Gull—The Blue Light Theatre Company offers a staging of Chekhov's play, in a translation by Tom Stoppard. Maria Tucci, Angie Phillips, Greg Naughton, Alex Draper, and Mark Blum are in the cast. In previews. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Symphonie Fantastique—The puppeteer Basil Twist's latest work, performed entirely underwater in a five-hundred-gallon aquarium, was inspired by Berlioz's celebrated composition. In previews. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Alter Egos—A one-man show written and performed by Jon McGovern. Saturdays at 9:30. (Solo Arts Group, 36 W. 17th St. 591-2719. Closes June 6.)

Art—Yasmina Reza's farce is a splendid vehicle for three masterly actors, Victor Garber, Alan Alda, and Alfred Molina. They portray friends whose fifteen-year relationship is threatened when one of them buys a large white canvas for two hundred thousand francs. Directed by Matthew Warchus. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/98.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Ascendancy—A drama by Gary Bonasorte, set in an AIDS clinic after the release of a promising new drug. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556.)

The Beauty Queen of Leenane—The precocious Anglo-Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's riveting winter's tale, set in a rural Irish cottage, about an aged mother and her virgin forty-year-old daughter, who is trapped in a punishing solitude. It's a simple, primitive story, yet it is filled with complex emotional surprises and reversals. (3/16/98) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Bob—You don't need to like—or even know—the work of the avant-garde director Robert Wilson in order to enjoy this wonderful one-man show, which pretends to be a biography but is really a thought-provoking examination of the nature of American culture. It's a collaborative work by the Saratoga International Theatre Institute, and every element—Will Bond's extraordinary performance, the script (an ostensibly nonsensical collage of sentences Wilson has uttered over the past thirty years, collected from printed interviews and recorded conversations), the lights, the sound—contributes to its power. Be there or be square. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475. Closes May 31.)

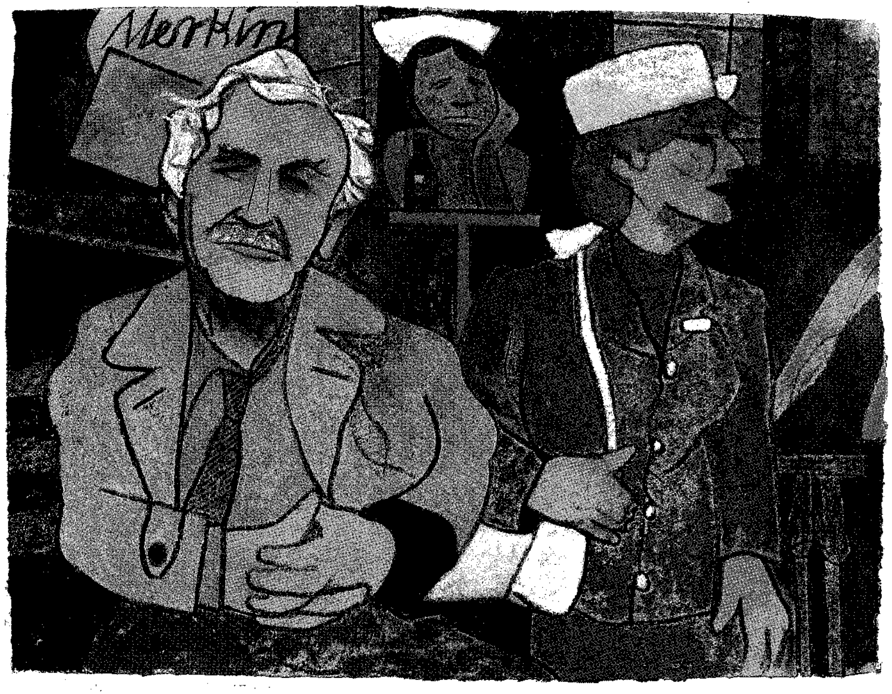
Bobby Supreme—A play by J. B. Miller, about the downfall of an Andrew Dice Clay/Howard Stern-style comic. (29th Street Rep, 212 W. 29th St. 465-0575. Closes May 23.)

Bus Riley & Co.—The Willow Cabin Theatre Company presents five short plays by William Inge. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 886-1889. Closes May 24.)

Cabaret—A mesmerizing production of the Kander and Ebb musical. Here, the dancers at the Kit Kat Klub, the symbol of anything-goes Weimar Germany, look shell-shocked and stigmatized. As the Emcee, Alan Cumming is astonishing—with his bruised-looking body, his huge, knowing eyes, and his satanic energy, he's a spectacle of mixed messages. Natasha Richardson, as Sally Bowles, casts a spectral glow. Directed by Sam Mendes. (4/6/98) (Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 719-1300.)

The Caucasian Chalk Circle—Brecht's parable play, in a staging by Andrei Serban with music by Elizabeth Swados. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes May 31.)

The Chairs—The British troupe Théâtre de Complicité's superb staging of Ionesco's one-act tragic farce has established finally and forever the indubitable poetry and genius of the play, written nearly half a century ago. Directed by Simon McBurney. (4/13/98) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)



Peter Falk, Erica Bradshaw, and Anne Jackson, in "Mr. Peters' Connections."

RICHARD MERKIN

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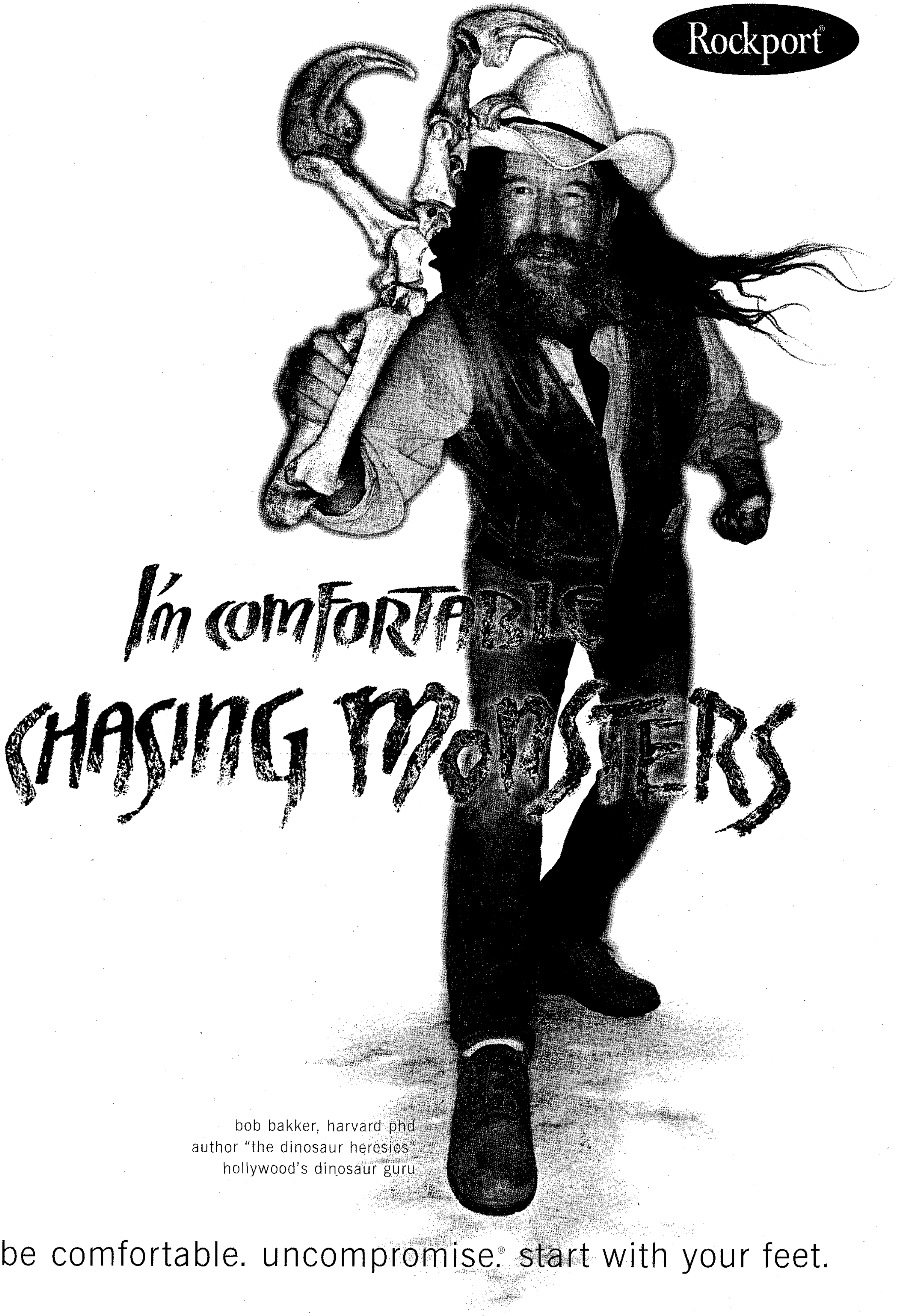

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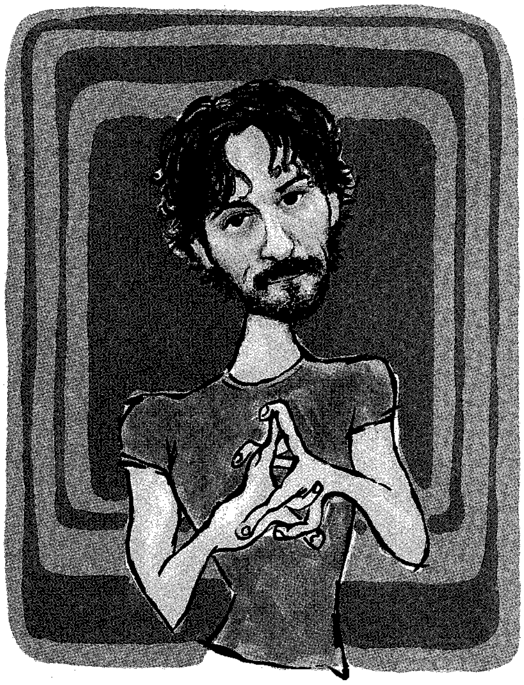

The monologuist Mike Albo, at HERE.

ROBERT MELEE

Degenerate Art—A peculiarly dispiriting cry against censorship. Centered on the infamous Nazi-organized exhibit of modern art in 1937 (in Third Reichspeak, "degenerate" art), this performance piece, developed in workshop by the Irondale Ensemble Project, is presented as a history lesson within a cabaret. The first act is seductive and powerful; the second act disintegrates into overbearing didacticism and a sort of sing-along for the audience. Terry Greiss, who plays the m.c., is a nuanced, moving actor who deserves better. Directed by Jim Niesen. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 633-1292. Closes May 23.)

The Diary of Anne Frank—Theatrically, this reworking of the 1955 play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett is an improvement, and the cast is fine. But the play's realism is its fundamental flaw: we can't really re-create for ourselves what Anne's dreadful situation was like. (12/15/97) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Dress to Kill—The British comic Eddie Izzard's new show. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Closes June 6.)

The Dying Gaul—A struggling writer gets seduced by Hollywood, in a new play by Craig Lucas. Mark Brokaw is the director. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

The Empty Beach—From the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre Company, a drama by Jaime Salom. Performances are in English Wednesdays through Fridays and in Spanish Saturdays and Sundays. (304 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes June 7.)

The Fastest Clock in the Universe—The British playwright Philip Ridley's comedy about a vain thirty-year-old who celebrates his nineteenth birthday each year. A New Group production. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Freak—In his "pseudo-autobiographical" one-man show about growing up in New York, John Leguizamo takes the audience on a very funny, breakneck jaunt down distorted-memory lane. He's a small guy, but his seemingly boneless body and boundless humor fill the large stage, and he absolutely charms, from start to finish. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Golden Child—A graceful, affecting production of David Henry Hwang's 1996 drama, which traces the impact of Christianity and Western ideas on one Chinese family over several generations. Hwang treats it all with wit and humor, so the evening is never heavy-handed. The cast, under the direction of James Lapine, is quite good, and the sets and costumes are simple and lovely. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

A Harlot's Progress—Puppet artist Theodora Skipitares translates William Hogarth's series of satirical engravings into a multimedia theatre event. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes May 31.)

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—Hedwig, as written and portrayed by John Cameron Mitchell, is a sweet transsexual singer from East Berlin, whose cabaret performance cum stadium act becomes a smart, funny, and very moving exploration of the redemptive, if perhaps fleeting, power of love. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

High Society—Based on Philip Barry's play "The Philadelphia Story" and the subsequent movie "High Society," this musical somehow manages to have all the kick of flat champagne. Melissa Errico is miscast in the central role of the patrician young Tracy Lord, but one is grateful for the soul-of-show-business professionalism of John McMartin, who is delightful as a tippling lecher, and for the talents of Anna Kendrick, a twelve-year-old Down-Easter making a winning Broadway début as Tracy's adorably smart-alecky little sister; Stephen Bogardus, Randy Graff, and Lisa Banes are also good. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Honour—This play by the Australian playwright Joanna Murray-Smith examines the relationships between two writers who have been married for thirty-two years (Jane Alexander and Robert Foxworth), a young journalist (Laura Linney), who is writing a profile of the husband and whose affair with him sets the play in motion, and the couple's daughter (Enid Graham). Murray-Smith brings some very smart words to bear on the truth that lies under the truisms of married life—and of the writing life—but the words don't add up to a satisfying, emotionally gripping drama. Two of the performances, though, lift the play to a level above the merely interesting: Ms. Alexander is warm and wrenching, and Ms. Graham presents a painful picture of a young adult grappling with disillusionment and rage. Gerald Gutierrez directed. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

A Huey P. Newton Story—Roger Guenveur Smith's mesmerizing (and demystifying) one-man show, which he assembled from interviews with and writings by the co-founder of the Black Panther Party. (Schomburg Center, Malcolm X Blvd. at 135th St. 491-2206. Closes May 30.)

I Am My Own Cheap Thrill—It's a man's world, and Amanda Vogel has something to say about it in her one-woman show. Thursdays at 10:30. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes June 4.)

Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop—Danny Hoch's new one-man show is a series of short monologues by characters concerned with at least one of the above. Mr. Hoch's versatility is astonishing, and at its best the show is perceptive and very funny. But some of the segments fall flat and others go on too long; on the whole, the evening should have been honed to a finer edge. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Joseph Gabriel Magic '98—Mr. Gabriel comes to New York by way of Las Vegas. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Judas Kiss—Liam Neeson portrays Oscar Wilde in David Hare's new drama, in a production by London's Almeida Theatre Company, directed by Richard Eyre. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Mike Albo—The monologuist holds forth every Wednesday at 8, through June 24. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Miss Coco Peru's Liquid Universe—A comedy about a Bronx boy who makes a round-the-world journey in a wig and a dress. Written by and starring Clinton Leupp. Sundays at 8, through June 28. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

Mr. Peters' Connections—Peter Falk returns to the stage to portray a retired pilot in Arthur Miller's new play. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

Never the Sinner—John Logan's 1985 play about Leopold and Loeb, the teen-age millionaires who murdered a child in Chicago in 1924, sweeps the audience into the boys' twisted friendship without losing sight of the sheer brutality of their "crime of the century"—a balancing act that Mr. Logan and the director, Ethan McSweeny, bring off beautifully. Jason Patrick Bowcutt and Michael Solomon are utterly convincing as the killers. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Quidam—The Montreal-based Cirque du Soleil continues to offer up the virtuosic feats of agility and daring for which it's celebrated, but this latest production is more densely layered with abstract imagery and more challenging to the eye. It unfolds like a richly textured, loopy dream, the kind one might slip into after a Fellini-film marathon. All is magical and good in this universe, and enormous fun. (The big top at Battery Park City. For more information, call 800-678-5440.)

Ragtime—E. L. Doctorow's epic novel is transformed into a historical pageant. It's a big, brave, passionate gamble, masterfully directed by Frank Galati. (2/2/98) (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

R & J—A promising, if not exactly new, idea—schoolboys escape regimentation and discover their own passion by performing "Romeo and Juliet"—yields a few gripping moments surrounded by a lot of overheated panting, shouting, and foot-stomping. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

The Sound of Music—Rebecca Luker is enormously winning as Maria, and the seven children in the cast are mostly delightful, but the production doesn't linger in the memory; there may be music in those hills, but the producers didn't seem to find a whole lot of fresh air up there. (4/6/98) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Sunshine Boys—A revival of Neil Simon's comedy about two irascible old vaudevillians, starring Ye Olde Odd Couple of television, Tony Randall and Jack Klugman. The sandpapery friction that the twosome showed on TV is now reduced to lovability. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Uncle Philip's Coat—An actor is plagued by memories of an uncle who escaped the Russian pogroms, in a one-man drama by Matty Selman. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes May 24.)

A View from the Bridge—The Roundabout Theatre's excellent revival of Arthur Miller's tragic story of the longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his obsession with his orphaned niece. (1/5/98) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach finds great dignity in the title character, an eighty-six-year-old Jewish widower, in Jeff Baron's sweet if predictable Upper West Side comedy. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

Wait Until Dark—Marisa Tomei and Quentin Tarantino star in a revival of Frederick Knott's 1966 suspense drama. Leonard Foglia is the director. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

LONG RUNS

AS BEES IN HONEY DROWN: Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert,

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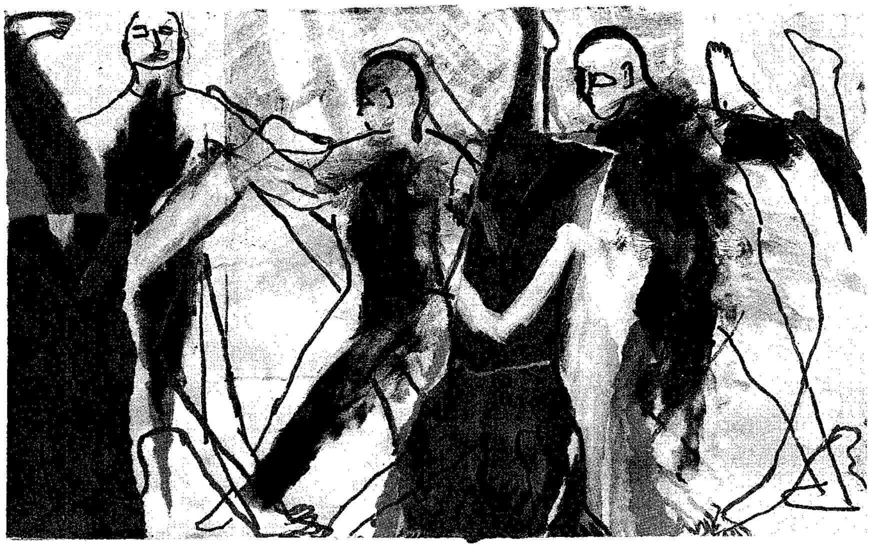
225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **MARC SALEM'S MINDGAMES:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **1776:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.



Lisa Race's "Deep Foot Blue," at Danspace Project.

KAREN CALDICOTT

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—May 20 at 7:30, the spring gala: "Two and Three Part Inventions," "Les Noces," and "Glass Pieces." . . . ¶ May 21 at 8: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "A Suite of Dances," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ May 22 at 8: "Union Jack," "Red Angels," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "West Side Story Suite." . . . ¶ May 23 at 2: "Divertimento No. 15," "A Suite of Dances," "Ash," and "Glass Pieces." . . . ¶ May 23 at 8: "Concerti Armonici," "Les Noces," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ May 24 at 3: "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," "Red Angels," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," and "West Side Story Suite." . . . ¶ May 26 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Symphonic Dances," and "West Side Story Suite." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 28.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—May 20 at 2 and 8: "The Merry Widow." . . . ¶ May 21-22 and May 25 at 8 and May 23 at 2 and 8: "Giselle." . . . ¶ May 26 at 8: "Symphonie Concertante," "La Sylphide, Act II," and "Sinfonietta." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through July 4.)

SAVION GLOVER/DOWNTOWN—The Miles Davis of tap sneaks into town with a pair of tappers (Ayodele Casel and Abron Glover), a quartet, a series of surprise guests, and a promise that no two of his twenty-three performances will come out the same. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. May 19, May 21-22, and May 25-26 at 8, May 20 at 2 and 8, and May 23 at 6 and 10. Through June 7.)

ELISA MONTE DANCE—Two programs, each with two works by Monte and two by her longtime cohort and fellow former Graham dancer, David Brown. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 19-23 at 8 and May 24 at 2 and 7:30.)

REGGIE WILSON/FIST AND HEEL PERFORMANCE GROUP—The company joins forces with the African Lesbian and Gay Workshop in "Mama'nem Ate Red Clay Dirt, How 'Bout Dem?" and other works. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 21-23 at 8 and May 24 at 3.)

"DEEP FOOT BLUE"—Lisa Race, a dancer who has done as much with the handstand as right-side-up dancers do on pointe, premières "Underview," a largely upside-down solo, and collaborates with Sondra Loring in an untitled duet. The title piece, with Andrew Boynton, Eric Handman, Holly Handman, Curt Haworth, Melanie Kloetzel, and Jennifer Nugent, continues the strapping dance style of "Tether." (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. May 21-24 at 8:30.)

"THESE WOMEN"—Amy Pivar presents a dance drama about a woman reviewing her own life after the death of a friend. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. May 20-23 at 8.)

"AFTER THE DREAM"—Ura Warisaya fuses flamenco and butoh dance styles. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202. May 21-24 at 8.)

"TAP EXTRAVAGANZA"—Buster Brown, Savion Glover, Jimmy Slyde, Roxane (Butterfly) Semadeni, and the Féraba African Rhythm Tap Group, among others, mark the hundred-and-twentieth birthday of Bill (Bojangles) Robinson with dances of their own. In between taps, the assembled honor this year's Flo-Bert award honorees, Gregory Hines and Barry Harris, with film clips, dance steps, proclamations, and reminiscences. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 24 at 7.)

ICE THEATRE OF NEW YORK—The collective of erstwhile Olympic skaters and international ice dancers perform choreography made for the rink, including "Cabaret Mañana," by Doug Webster. (Sky Rink at Chelsea Piers, Pier 61, at 23rd St. 929-5811. May 20-21 at 7.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

MARY CLEERE HARAN—The great cabaret chanteuse performs "Pennies from Heaven," a collection of classic movie songs and salty anecdotes from the Depression era. (Manhattan Theatre Club, City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. May 20-22 at 7:30 and May 23-24 at 3 and 7:30. Through June 7.)

PETER, PAUL & MARY—These urban folkies are certainly older and wider than the earnest trio of yore, but their spirits remain strong, and their harmonies are still remarkable. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 20 at 8.)

VAN HALEN—America's greatest gift to air-guitar onanism just watched in horror as its new album, "Van Halen 3," plummeted off the charts, selling like a week-old bran muffin. Thanks to an extremely bad new lead singer, Gary Cherone, formerly of Extreme, this once larger than life hard-rock outfit has become a lumbering, truck-stop bar band. Somewhere, David Lee Roth is snickering. With the up-and-coming post-metal pop of Creed. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. May 22 at 8.)

"A SATURDAY NEW YORK MUSICAL"—Featuring such golden-era combos as the Drifters, Johnny Maestro and the Brooklyn Bridge, Lou Christie, the Platters, the Coasters, and the Marvelettes. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 23 at 8.)

CLUBS

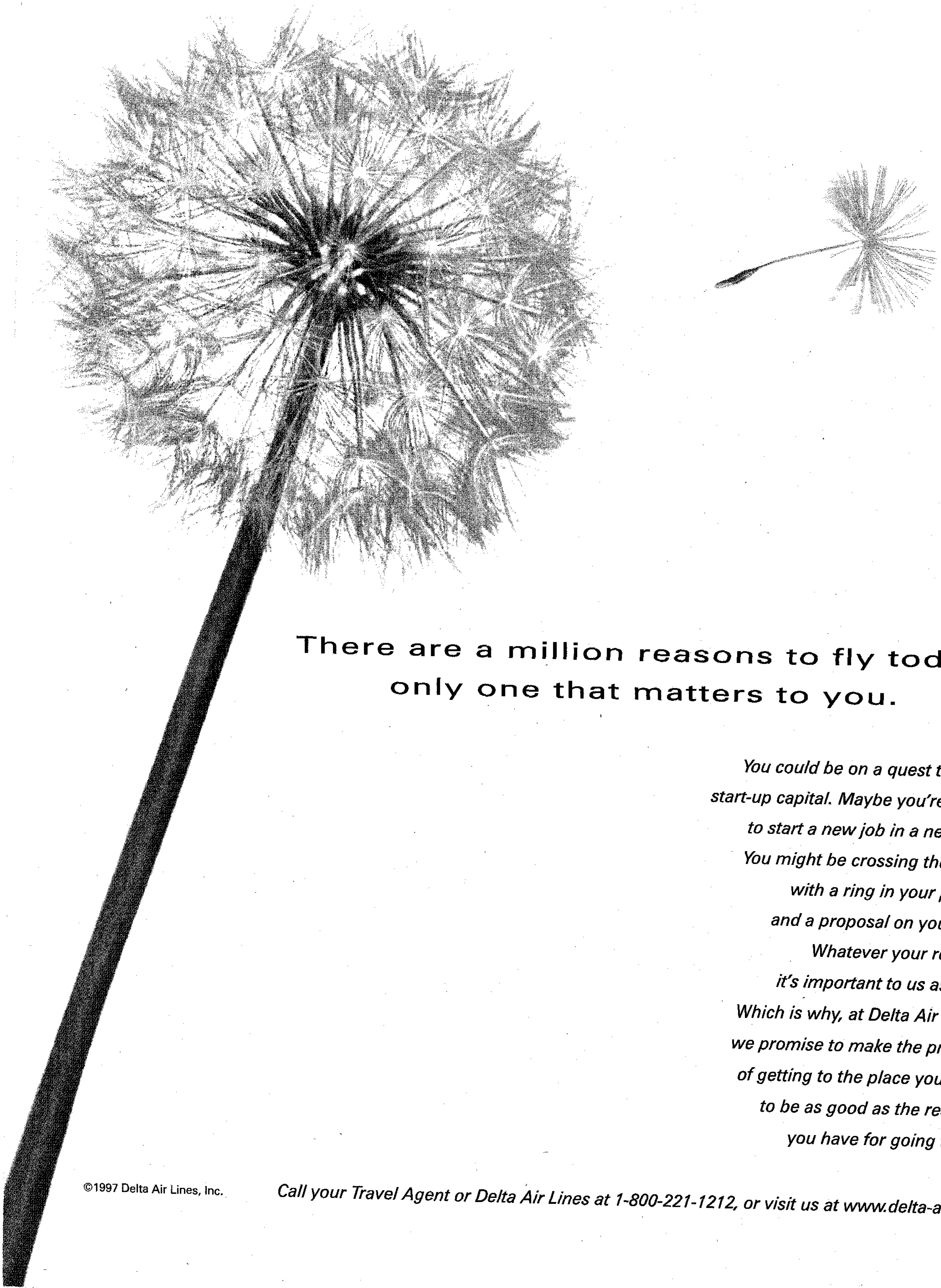
(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—May 21: **"NIGHTBIRDS,"** an evening of neo-folk pop featuring **PATTI ROTHBERG** and **CINDY LEE BERRYHILL.** May 22: Possibly the best country singer-songwriter since Roseanne Cash, **KIM RICHEY** has a saucy voice and a harsh sense of humor. May 23: The **DAVE DAVIES BAND.** Long before the era of Oasis, there was no better example of rock sibling rivalry than the endless and often incomprehensible feud between the Kinks' Ray and Dave Davies. Ray, the elder, aired his grievances on his recent solo outing, and now Dave is on tour. But don't expect much in the way of bitterness: Dave is content with simply blowing out the jams on his solo work and a lot of great Kinks tunes.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—May 21: **TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS.** If Bob Marley and the Wailers were the heart of reggae, then Frederick (Toots) Hibbert and his Maytals must surely be its soul: it was the group's 1968 hit, "Do the Reggay," that gave ska, dub, rock steady, and every other substratum of Jamaican music one all-encompassing name. With **THIRD WORLD.**

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 20: A benefit for the family of the late cellist Tom Cora. With **FRED FRITH, JOHN ZORN,** and others. May 21: **PUCHO AND HIS LATIN SOUL BROTHERS.** May 23: The downtown aesthetes **LES SAVY FAV** offer murky, guitar-based hard rock with angry-young-man metal leanings. May 25: **"SHUT THE F**K UP,"** an evening of music and spoken-word performance, with **BOB HOLMAN,** the funky all-women band **HOMER EROTIC,** and others. May 26: **ELLIOTT SHARP AND TERRAPLANE.** Sharp, who's usually heard producing unearthly sounds on a Frankensteinian instrument from which coat hangers and other metallic objects protrude, also happens to be a monster blues guitarist; Terraplane is his rootsy trio.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—The Texas-bred troubadour **JIMMIE DALE GILMORE** (May 21) was named after country legend Jimmie Rodgers, and his panoramic songs roll on like one of the Singing Brakeman's trains.



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S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—May 20-22: Brazilian chanteuse **ASTRUD GILBERTO,** best known for her delicate, impromptu recording of "The Girl from Ipanema." On May 24, reggae stalwart **SUGAR MINOTT** celebrates his birthday, and on May 26, veteran dancehall singer **FREDDIE MC GREGOR** celebrates just still being around. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—May 20: **KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD.** This lanky, flaxen-haired twenty-year-old blues prodigy could pass for a member of Hanson, but his surprisingly mature tone and grinding guitar work suggest a preternatural link to the Mississippi Delta. He's a bit too flashy, but by the time he grows up, he may be something special. May 21: The **FAMILY STAND** still makes emotional funk, rock, and soul that features smart lyrics and precise architecture. With former Living Colour front man **COREY GLOVER.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—A neo-con down to his boots, altoist **JESSE DAVIS** (May 20-23) openly displays his affection for Charlie Parker and Benny Carter with an enthusiasm that precludes imitation. May 24: The **CHICO O'FARRILL AFRO-CUBAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Arranger and bandleader O'Farrill, one of the grand architects of Afro-Cuban jazz, has made one of the most welcome comebacks of the late nineties. His balance of steaming Latin rhythms, fervid bop improvisation, and resonant horn charts is still as bracing as ever. May 25: The **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI BIG BAND,** featuring the bandleader's husband, flutist and tenorist **LEW TABACKIN.** Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through May 24: The **PAT MARTINO** quartet and the **MARC COPLAND** quintet, featuring **RANDY BRECKER.** Martino, the archetypal guitarist's guitarist, has won the admiration of three generations of jazz fretmen. He knows how to transform knowledge, technique, and ideas into genuine music—a notion lost on most guitar manglers. Pianist Copland is a switch-hitter—straight-ahead jazzman one day, fusioneer the next. No matter which direction his band takes, you can expect it to move at full throttle. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BOBBY SHORT** has come home for a two-month stay. . . . ¶ Across the hall, pianist **BARBARA CARROLL** is in charge at Bemelmans Bar.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through May 24: Although most likely it wasn't the effulgent Cuban pianist **GONZALO RUBALCABA** who brought out the virtuoso in saxophonist **JOE LOVANO** on their recent duet recording, "Flying Colors," it may have been the masterly tenorist who coaxed the lyrical poet out of Rubalcaba. The album is a stirring effort from an unlikely matchup: whereas Lovano excels in his ability to play with just about anybody, Rubalcaba, a florid, Latin-out-of-Lizst stylist, doesn't exactly exude a team-player vibe. But mutual respect carried the day; their partnership demonstrates the advantages of butting heads. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—He made his mark as Terence Blanchard's pianist, but **BRUCE BARTH** (through May 23) has been deep in the bandleading fray for several years now. He's a young modernist in the manner of early Herbie Hancock.

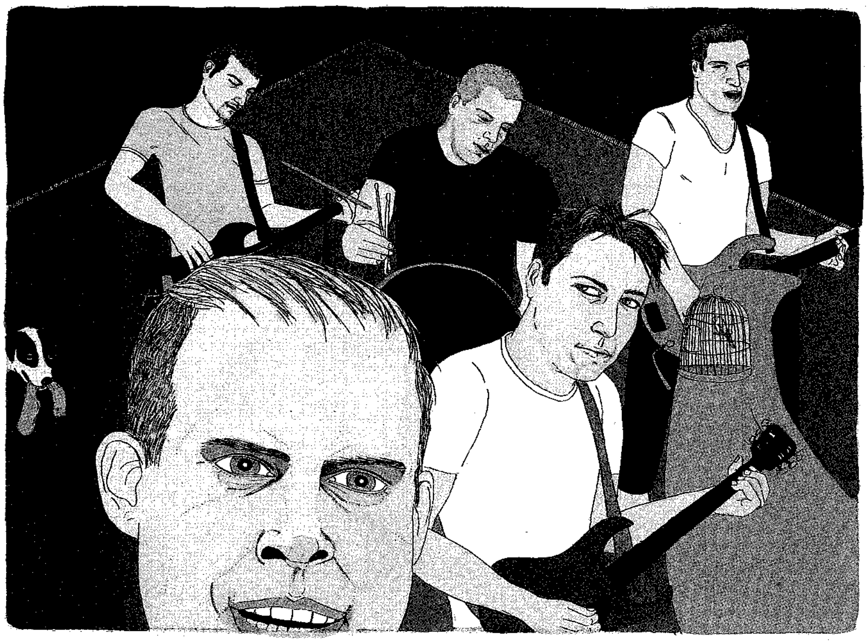
Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Through May 23: Pianist **RENEE ROSNES,** accompanied by bassist **SCOTT COLEY.**

Michael's Pub at Bill's Gay Nineties, 57 E. 54th St. (758-2272)—**JULIE WILSON,** the doyenne of New York's chanteuses, has decided to settle in for a permanent, or at least open-ended, residence at this upstairs club room. For the time being, she's crafting her show as a tribute to the legendary showman Florenz Ziegfeld.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—The great cabaret in the sky. **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** is back, this time to celebrate her seventieth birthday. In addition to her longtime musical director and pianist, John Oddo, she's got a jumping small band with her, including guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli, bassist Jay Leonhart, and trumpeter George Rabbai. Through May 23.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through May 24: **RANDY WESTON'S AFRICAN RHYTHMS.** With one foot in Africa and the other in the Big Apple, pianist and composer Weston combines the rhythmic diversity of the African-American diaspora with the lyrical smarts of New York bebop. His music mingles percussive energy with pointillistic poetry, and the results can be bracing—this is world music that never devalues its sources. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through May 24: The **LOU DONALDSON** quartet. Well-turned bop soil spills onto R. & B. terrain when Donaldson, an alto saxophonist, hits the stage, pledging allegiance to both virtuosity and entertainment. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.



Les Savy Fav headlines a bill at the Knitting Factory.

LARA TOMLIN

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Ellsworth Kelly on the Roof," an installation of large-scale metal sculptures in the Cantor roof garden. . . . ¶ "Augustin Pajou, Royal Sculptor." Through May 24. . . . ¶ "Pierre-Paul Prud'hon (1758-1823)." Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Elegant China Ware: Paris Porcelain in America." The American designer Henry Mead declared his domestic china "equal in firmness to the French"—he had to promote it somehow, since French porcelain after the Revolution was so affordable (even tastemaker President Washington collected it). Hand-painted vases popular in the Federalist era depict scenes from the War of 1812 and views of old New York, while a harlequin tea set from the same decade seems uncannily modern, in mix-and-match shades of salmon and blue. Through June 14. . . . ¶ "Honoré Lannuier, Parisian Cabinetmaker in Federal New York." French-born Charles-Honoré Lannuier (1779-1819) was among the first to tap into the American hunger for European sophistication. The work of New York's resident "ébéniste de Paris" can be compared with the craftsmanship of such local competitors as Duncan Phyfe: mammoth bedsteads and well-preserved bureaus, in addition to Lannuier's trademark card tables, with their gilded caryatids and sprays of American stars. Through June 14. . . . ¶ "Paul Strand Circa 1916." Through May 31. . . . ¶ "The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part One: Calligraphy." Through June 28. . . . ¶ "American Furniture and the Art of Connoisseurship." Through Sept. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Two shows, the Chuck Close retrospective and "Artists and Subjects: Picasso to Stella," examine strategies of twentieth-century portraiture. Through May 26 and May 25, respectively. . . . ¶ "The Clutter of Happenstance: Photographs by Robert Cumming." Through June 23. . . . ¶ Twenty-six recently acquired photographs by Garry Winogrand are on view. Through May 31. . . . ¶ "Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons: Spoken Softly with Mama." Through May 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years." Through June 3. . . . ¶ "Visions of Paris: Robert Delaunay's Series." Through May 24. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"A Century in Crisis" comprises the contemporary portion of the institution's blockbuster exhibition "China: 5,000 Years." Through May 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"The Studio Within" is a Disneyesque mockup of Richard Pousette-Dart's last atelier (in a carriage house in Suffern, New York), which, for hokey verisimilitude, lacks only an animated likeness of the late Abstract Expressionist to fling some paint around and peruse the copies of Rilke and Homer casually placed on a nearby stool. Still, it's worth a look, if only for the bombastic diary pages on display, the queer white sculptures in the eaves, and several fine paintings, like the bubblegum impasto of "Amalfa" (1962). Through Sept. 13. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Masters of Color and Light: Homer, Sargent, and the American Watercolor Movement" showcases more than a hundred and fifty works from the museum's extensive collection. Through Aug. 23. . . . ¶ "Jewels of the Romanovs: Treasures of the

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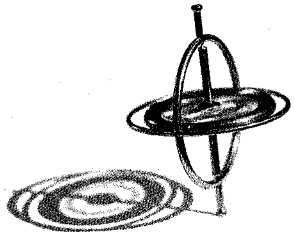

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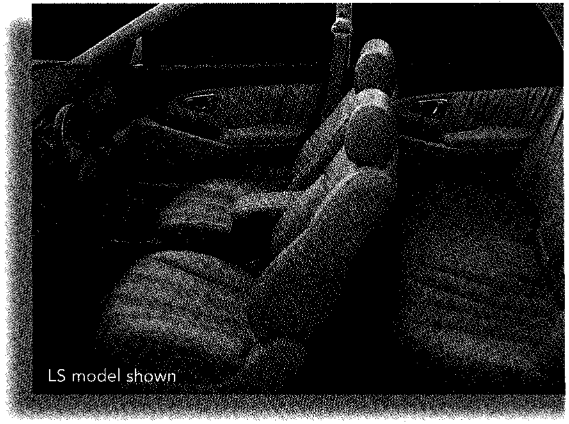

LS model shown

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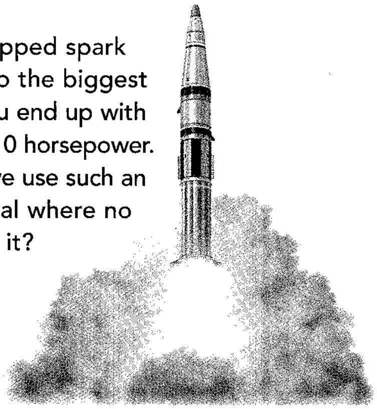

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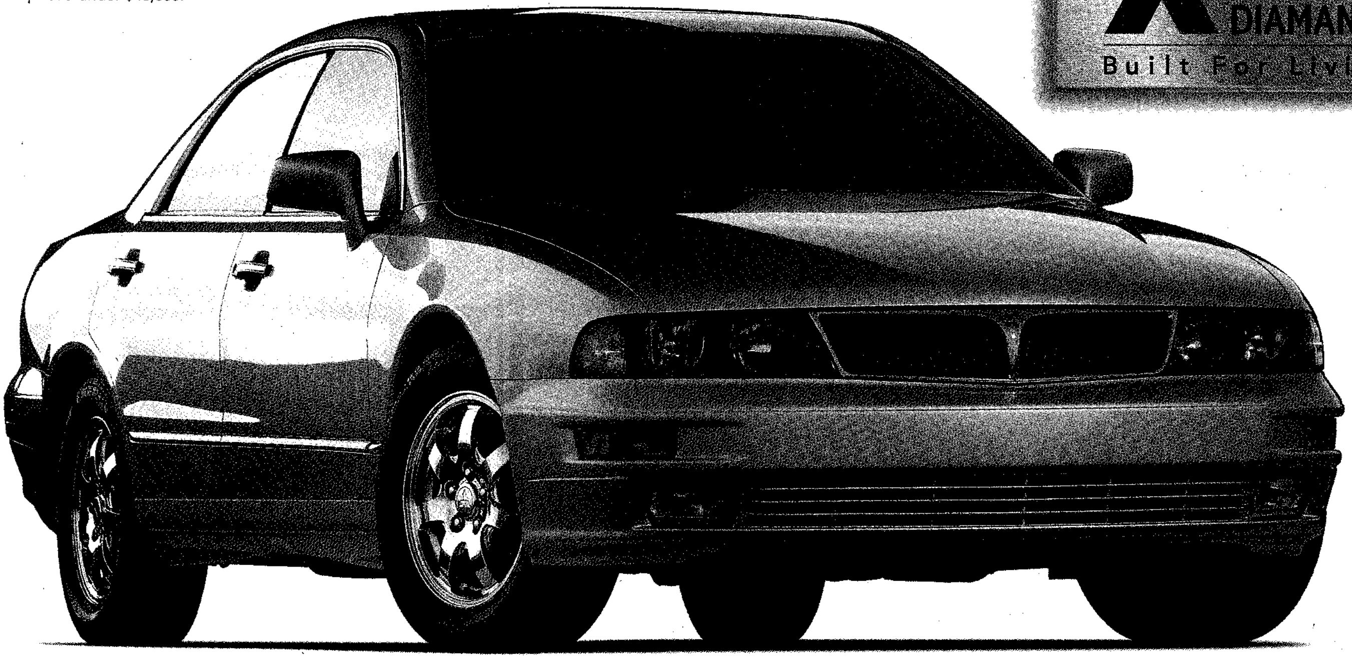
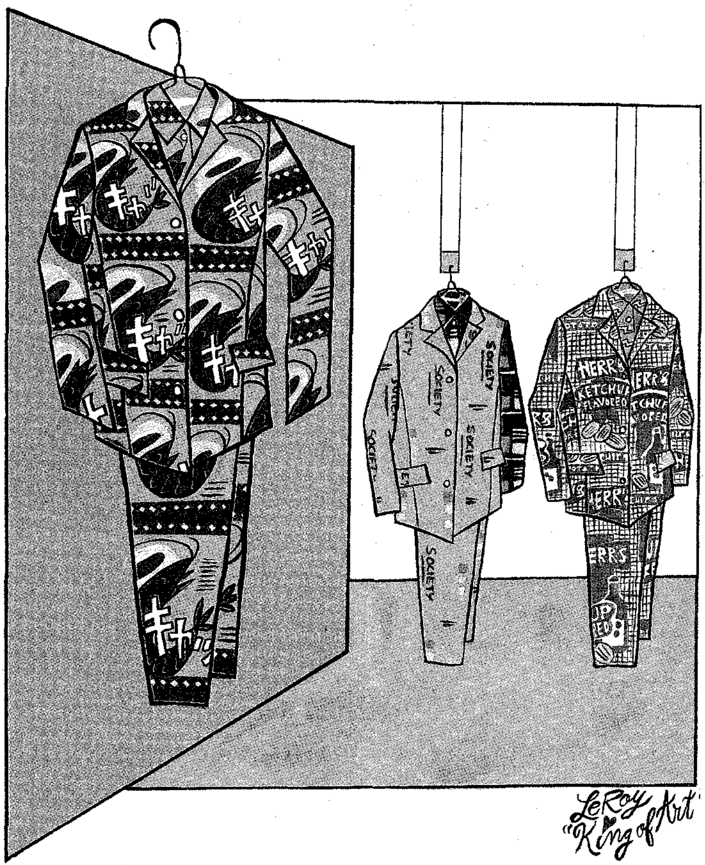


"Russian Imperial Court" presents crown jewels and other baubles, including the most celebrated sapphire in the world (before Kate Winslet's), a 260-carat specimen given by Alexander II to his wife. Through July 5. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—"An Expressionist in Paris: The Paintings of Chaim Soutine," the first New York exhibition devoted to the feverish Lithuanian since 1950. Through Aug. 16. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (869-8089)—"Particular Voices: Portraits of Gay and Lesbian Writers" presents Robert Giard's photographs of more than a hundred writers: Tony Kushner beside a silk Karl Marx pillow, Allen Ginsberg showing off his own photo of William Burroughs, and many others. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—"Alex Katz Under the Stars: American Landscapes 1951-1995." Katz's landscapes tend to be either small or huge—the best of the latter are the "Superb Lilies #2" (1967), vibrant as a Rosenquist, and a lovely, Sheeler-esque "SoHo Morning" from two decades later. More loosely painted scenes of grass and rushing water reveal nothing more than Katz's deceptively simple house-paint technique; as in his superflat portraits, the surfaces of his landscapes hint at turmoil—or absolute vacuity—within. Through June 21. . . . ¶ "Gordon Matta-Clark: Drawings Retrospective and Re-creation of Historic Projects." Matta-Clark (1943-78) was known for slicing chunks from houses and office buildings. He would have had fun with his retrospective at P.S. 1; his desire to, say, bisect the elaborately renovated space would have made for an intriguing institutional dilemma. As it stands, this tribute to the architect turned artist is uncommonly thorough and restrained. It presents Matta-Clark's most striking public projects without sensationalizing a man who, like his Earth Art colleague Robert Smithson, died on the cusp of something great. The exhibition includes documentary photographs, notes, and films of works like "Open House (Dumpster)" (1971), a makeshift gallery in a SoHo garbage receptacle, which is also re-created in the museum's outdoor galleries. Through Aug. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)



Couture made from disposable plastic product packaging, by Annette Meyer (Storefront for Art and Architecture).

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Stuart Davis (1892-1964) / **Gaston Lachaise** (1882-1935)—Early plein-air landscapes by the celebrated abstractionist, painted during summers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Two strains are at work: the flat, thin colors in the Cubist-inspired "Church Tower," from 1916, and the later workmanlike exuberance of "Tobacco Fields" (1919), where thickly impastoed green stalks fairly vibrate under an icy van Gogh sky. The two styles would later coalesce into a jazzy American modernism. / Beware the exhibition that proudly displays a map of all its stops since 1967 (Cedar Falls! Amarillo! Saskatoon!). Lachaise was an Armory Show veteran whose sculptures and drawings of the female form—or at least parts of it—lie somewhere between Rodin and Botero, without the subtlety. Open Mondays; both shows through June 13. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606.)

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1652)—This is the stuff French movies are made on: In 1611, young Gentileschi was deflowered by her mentor, Agostino Tassi, and her father, Orazio, then initiated the mother of all lawsuits, which involved torture of the girl (standard seventeenth-century jurisprudence) and an eventual conviction. Artemisia is known for her cathartic "Judith Beheading Holofernes," in the Uffizi; her best work here is an arresting "Penitent Magdalene" (ca. 1620-25), an apparent self-portrait with a tearful come-hither stare, done in the luminous style of Caravaggio. (In a slightly odious display of opportunism, the gallery has also sprinkled in lesser paintings by both Tassi and Orazio.) Through June 13. (Feigen, 49 E. 68th St. 628-0700.)

Howard Hodgkin—Splendid new paintings by Britain's premier abstractionist. Skeptics who dismiss the present and future of abstract art may be forced to reevaluate their convictions in light of Hodgkin's work. Perhaps the genius lies in an apparent ruse—the paintings seem to function simply as lovely slathers of often jewel-toned color on wooden supports. In fact, Hodgkin's pictures, while strictly abstract formally, carry a voltaic psychological charge; suggestions of landscape abound, but it is the sense of *portraiture,* of glimpsing character, that lifts these pictures out of high-end decoration and into the sublime. Through June 13. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313.)

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) **and Willem de Kooning** (1904-97)—How can you lose with several paintings, works on paper, and sculptures by two of the most important artists of the century? Two pictures from circa 1942, an early de Kooning "Woman" and a famous portrait of Picasso's mistress of those years, the Surrealist photographer Dora Maar, anchor the show, but there are more than enough other masterpieces to make this show museum-quality, to say the least. Through May 28. (C & M, 45 E. 78th St. 861-0020.)

"Mexico Reconfigured"—A participant calls this a show of very Mexican, young Mexican, and New York Mexican painters: in other words, a snapshot of the upheaval in Mexican art since the sixties, when the monolithic influence of muralists like Orozco and Siqueiros began to wane, leaving younger artists to sort themselves into one of the three groups above. Francisco Toledo is the Expressionist patriarch, who offers a Klee-inspired crucifix here. Large, self-aggrandizing canvases from local Mexican expats Ray Smith and Julio Galan make them the Salle and Schnabel of their generation. Monica Castillo's three-dimensional self-portraits hint at a more recent (and radical) avant-garde: women artists who eschew the national art form of painting altogether. Through June 12. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510.)

"Taboo: Repression and Revolt in Modern Art"—A century's worth of bad boys and girls, from Gustav Klimt to Sue Coe. A tighter fo-

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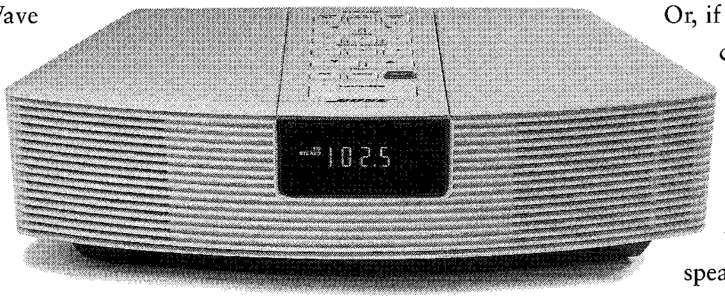

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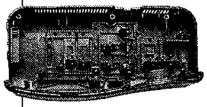

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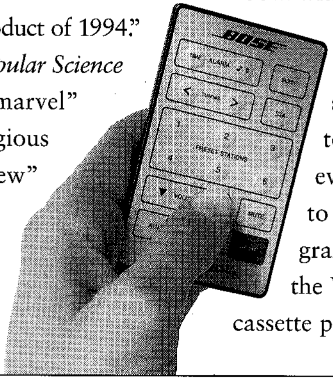

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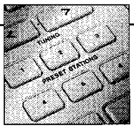

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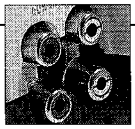

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CONCERNING WOMEN

Important advances in women's health often emerge from the laboratories of scientists committed to "pure" or "basic" research. Increasingly in recent years, researchers around the world have been energized by the special concerns of women. ❧ The Weizmann Institute in Israel offers an eloquent example. Accomplished Weizmann researchers from many different disciplines are engaged in a widening spectrum of innovative projects bearing on women's health. ❧ Breast cancer ranks high on the agenda, including new magnetic resonance imaging techniques for detection and non-invasive diagnosis, and investigations of genetic and immunological breast cancer therapies. Other studies target ovarian and cervical cancer, new infertility treatments for women, new contraceptive drugs, new understanding of fetal development, and many other aspects of basic medical research. Environmental and food-related research make their own impact on the well-being of women. ❧ The needs are global. The tasks are urgent. Wherever scientists conduct basic research to enhance women's health, they deserve full public and private support.

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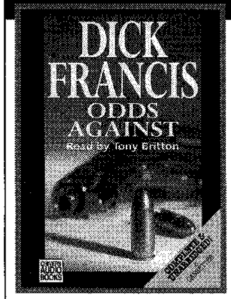

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cus would have helped, but the theme is ambitious, and among the revolutionaries and shock-jocks are some surprising gems, such as the French photographer Pierre Molinier's ecstatic fetish montages and the pioneering feminist Hannah Wilke's incandescent self-portrait with her mother, who was ravaged by breast cancer. Through May 30. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734.)

SHORT LIST—JOSEF ALBERS, Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through May 30. . . . PAUL CADMUS, DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Through June 19. . . . JANE FREILICHER, DeNagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Through May 29. . . . DIANE ANDREWS HALL and GUY PÈNE DU BOIS, Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767. Both shows through June 26. . . . MARSDEN HARTLEY, Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 767-1852. Through June 20. . . . REBECCA HORN, Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160. Through June 13. . . . ALFREDO JAAR, Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. 315-0470. Through June 13. . . . PER KIRKEBY, Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Through May 30. . . . PAUL KLEE, Krugier, 41 E. 57th St. 755-7288. Through July 23. . . . DAVID LEVINE, Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545. Through June 12. . . . REGINALD MARSH, ACA Galleries, 41 E. 57th St. 644-8300. Through June 18. . . . JOAN MITCHELL and PATTI SMITH, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Both shows through June 5. . . . ISAMU NOGUCHI, Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through June 26. . . . EDWARD HENRY POTTHAST, Peters, 24 E. 78th St. 628-9760. Through June 20. . . . TOM SHANNON, Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St. 265-8876. Through June 13. . . . JOAN SNYDER, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through June 12. . . . NICOLAS DE STAEL, Cadé, 1045 Madison Ave., at 79th St. 734-3670. Through June 20. . . . FRANK STELLA, Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550. Through June 26. . . . JOSEPH STELLA, York, 21 E. 65th St. 772-9155. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays; through June 30.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

POLLY APPELBAUM—"Ice," a floor piece made of velvet and dye. Nominally sculpture, the work mixes various mediums: painting, assemblage, and traditional handicraft. Within the jumbled corpuscles of color lurks a sense of order that betrays Apfelbaum's formalist roots. Through June 6. (D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460.)

ELLSWORTH KELLY—Two shows, one utterly extraordinary and the other simply very good. "Sculpture for a Large Wall, 1957" (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St.) has been restored and installed to stunning effect. The hundred and four anodized panels, eleven feet high and sixty-five feet long, salvaged recently from a Greyhound bus terminal in Philadelphia slated for destruction, remains one of the most important works in Kelly's career, and it marks an aesthetic turning point, from the grid-based Paris-period works of the early fifties to the shaped canvases and reliefs that have since preoccupied him, several new examples of which can be seen at Marks, 523 W. 24th St. Both shows through June 20. (For more information, call 243-0200.)

TOM SACHS—In previous shows, this young artist has suggested connections between instruments of violence and chic-label consciousness, e.g., guns and bombs tricked up in the signature styles of Hermès and Prada. This time out, Sachs ups the ante with a full-scale replica of Fat Man, the bomb dropped on Nagasaki; the interior has been jazzed up with a variety of Sony products, and gallery-goers may crane their necks inside to watch "Blade Runner," "Dr. No," etc. In the rear gallery, the artist has built a tower of handcrafted Hello Kitty products, based on items from his own collection. Through June 6. (Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753.)

"THREE CATHOLICS: RUSCHA, MAPPLETHORPE, WARHOL"—The concept sounds a little hokey, but the show is splendid. Heaven, Hell, death, sin, redemption—as well as their crass commercialization—are explored in various mediums by three artists possessed by the shadows of their childhood faith, inflected with irony. Through June 27. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

Short List—**liesbeth bik and jos van der pol,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through June 30. . . . **vincent bizien,** Au Base, 433 W. 14th St. 414-0563. Through May 30. . . . **alfredo ceibal,** Kravets/Wehby, 529 W. 21st St. 352-2238. Through June 6. . . . **meredith danluck,** Kreps, 529 W. 20th St. 741-8849. Through June 13. . . . **nancy dwyer,** Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. 206-0297. Through June 20. . . . **olafur eliasson,** Bonakdar Jancou, 521 W. 21st St. 414-4144. Through June 4. . . . **munro galloway,** DeChiara Stewart, 521 W. 26th St. 967-6007. Through June 6. . . . **maximilian goldfarb,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through June 20. . . . **pamela harris,** Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through June 6. . . . **janice krasnow,** Martz, 529 W. 20th St. 206-3686. Through May 23. . . . **ree morton,** Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474. Through June 6. . . . **david reed,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through July 3. . . . **thomas trosch,** Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. 633-6555. Through June 19. . . . **jane and louise wilson,** 303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through June 20.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Robert Irwin—Pace has supplemented the extraordinary Irwin installation at Dia with paintings and sculptures by this preëminent artist of the California Light and Space movement. The earliest painting here, "Pier Series 1" (1959), bears an imprint of Abstract Expressionism, especially in its crudely impastoed striations, but with such pictures as "Crazy Otto" (1962) it's already possible to make out Irwin's dazzling hybrid of opticality and minimalism. As the decade wears on, Irwin's work grows trippier, with more lavish optical experiences of the what-you-see-maybe-isn't variety. Through June 19. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224.)

Annette Meyer—Pleated dresses, shirts, and three-piece suits made from disposable plastic product packaging from India (Society Tea), Europe (Phileas Fogg tortillas), and the United States (Fig Newtons), among others. Through June 13. (Storefront for Art and Architecture, 97 Kenmare St. 431-5795.)

"Shadows of a Hand: The Drawings of Victor Hugo"—The French literary lion called his ink sketches "these things that amuse me between two verses"; at more than four thousand drawings, that's a lot of verse. Hugo's washy, atmospheric works prefigure abstract art, from Rorschach to Rothko, and "Ruined Aqueduct," from 1850, is moodily precise, hinting at both Whistler and Hopper. A surprising, even inspiring, dêbut/retrospective. Through June 13. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166.)

Short List—**chantal akerman,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through June 13. . . . **carlos andrade,** Malca, 580 Broadway. 966-8854. Through June 15. . . . **mel bochner,** Markey, 55 Vandam St. 627-4446. Through June 6. . . . **christopher brown,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. 431-6880. Through June 13. . . . **reg butler,** Kent, 67 Prince St. 966-4500. Through June 20. . . . **robert heckes,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. 941-5711. Through May 30. . . . **amy jenkins,** Kustera, 41 Wooster St. 965-1527. Through June 13. . . . **wolfgang laib,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through June 6. . . . **sam messer,** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through June 13. . . . **balder olrik,** Deven Golden, 16 Mercer St. 334-3124. Through June 20. . . . **yoko ono, michelle lopez,** and **cecily brown,** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. All shows through May 30. . . . **izhar patkin,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through June 13. . . . **george peck,** Trans Hudson, 416 W. 13th St. 242-3232. Through June 13. . . . **lucien rees roberts,** Davies, 23 Commerce St. 243-6840. Through May 30. . . . **brian tolle,** Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831. Through June 6. . . . **robert yarber,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. 966-6160. Through May 30.

GALLERIES—OTHER VENUES

Dan Devine—A '79 VW Rabbit, cut up and reassembled with the interior facing out and the hood, doors, and trunk scrunched inside. The sculptor explains the procedure in a set of hilarious instructions, "How to Turn Your Car Inside Out," available at the gallery ("Be sure to have a pile of clean rags at your disposal" and, later, "Now that you have cut your car into pieces carefully lay them out in a large open space with room for walking in between"). The work recalls any number of literal sculptors, both comic and grandiose (Matta-Clark, Christo), without losing sight of everyday anxieties, like parallel parking. Through May 25. (Pierogi 2000, 167 N. 9th St., Brooklyn. 718-599-2144.)

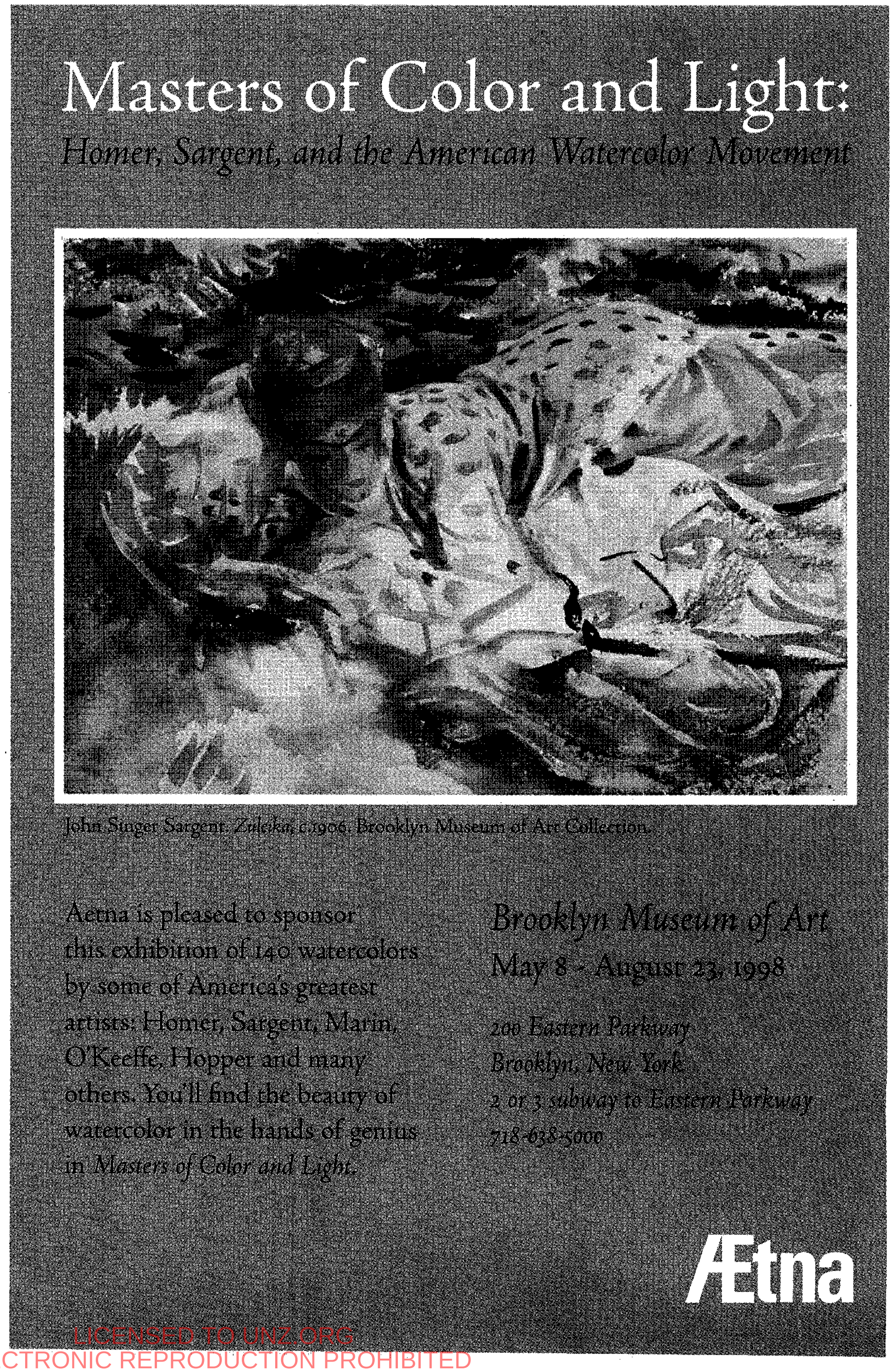
AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—May 20: French furniture. . . . ¶ May 21: American paintings, drawings, and sculpture, including works by Hassam, Homer, Whistler, and Chase from the collection of the late Wall Street wizard and racehorse breeder Thomas Mellon Evans, Sr. . . . ¶ May 22: Old Master paintings, including more than fifty pieces from the Evans collection, by Rubens, Steen, and others. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.)

Sotheby's—May 20: A single-owner sale of forty-five paintings of the American West, by Remington, Russell, Bierstadt, Sharp, and others. . . . ¶ May 21: Old Master paintings. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Doyle—European and American paintings and sculpture. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. May 20.)

Swann—Printed and manuscript Americana, including many items relating to the early history of California, Texas, and the Southwest. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. May 21.)



Masters of Color and Light:

Homer, Sargent, and the American Watercolor Movement

John Singer Sargent. *Zuleika,* c.1906. Brooklyn Museum of Art Collection.

Aetna is pleased to sponsor this exhibition of 140 watercolors by some of America's greatest artists: Homer, Sargent, Marin, O'Keeffe, Hopper and many others. You'll find the beauty of watercolor in the hands of genius in *Masters of Color and Light.*

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May 8 - August 23, 1998

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Ed Burtynsky / Lois Conner—"In the Wake of Progress," a strong show of color images taken at mineral-tailing sites and industrial recycling plants in southeast Ontario. The tailings are residue from mining nickel ore, and they are a horrifying Day-Glo orange. The stunner here is a large diptych of an oxbow-shaped river of nickel cutting a swath through a nearly dead, charcoal-black plain. In the distance, meagre but hardy stands of birch do what they can to survive. / This survey of Conner's platinum panoramic views of the Chinese landscape includes early vertical, scroll-like meditations along with her more characteristic horizontal vistas. Some of the pictures are printed on translucent vellum, which allows the artist to bring out the faintest mountains in the hazy distance, an achievement like that of a highly skilled watercolorist. Both shows through May 30. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

Rena Bass Forman—Large, sepia-toned prints of the lush landscape of Bali—gently terraced agricultural fields under bright white clouds, a secluded waterfall, a quiet temple surrounded by water. "Bali No. 13," taken with infrared black-and-white film, is an eerie scene in which the blue sky has turned black and the verdant foliage is a snowy white. Through May 30. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

Emmet Gowin—For nearly two decades this master image-maker and printer has been taking aerial pictures of the American landscape which present, among other things, the beautiful geometry of pivot irrigation, the scary reality of missile silos in the middle of the heartland, the sad waste of strip-mining, and the devastation of underground nuclear testing. Through June 13. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

David Malin—A comet (Halley's), nebulae (Horsehead, Orion, Crab), galaxies (Sombrero, M83), and a supernova (1987A) are just some of the cosmic phenomena that vie for your attention in this good-looking show of large color work by a veteran astrophotographer. Malin shoots not from the Hubble but from a mountaintop observatory in Australia; his pioneering, complex techniques reproduce as exactly as possible the true visible-light colors of the cosmos. Through June 20. (Schickler, 560 Broadway. 431-6363.)

Michael Prince—The artist's first solo show consists of small prints that employ soft focus and often a short depth of field, so that, for instance, the shoulders of a small boy are in focus, but his face and wide open mouth are not. With deft assuredness, Prince abstracts everyday scenes into emblems of menace, fear, and joy. Through June 13. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

Gerald Slota—Self-consciously disturbing black-and-white works that nevertheless succeed in giving you the shivers. Slota dispenses with all the photographic norms: he cuts up his often blurry and washed-out images, tapes them back together, scrawls over them with crayon, and scratches them with sharp implements. One truly creepy image shows an oblivious boy being cradled by the hands of a spectre-like image wearing a heavy hunter-plaid coat. Through May 23. (Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.)

Dan Weiner (1919-59)—More than fifty photographs (most of them vintage prints) from the forties and fifties by a photojournalist who had a great influence on the work of Robert Frank, Garry Winogrand, and Lee Friedlander. Weiner doesn't idealize post-war America, but he's not as desolate as Frank was, either; he captures the urban masses in clear-eyed images that are perfectly balanced between pathos and bathos. Through June 13. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Shrinks to Fit

Is Freud on the rebound? For quite a while, it's been fashionable to knock the father of psychoanalysis, but ninety-eight years after "The Interpretation of Dreams" it looks like he's mounting an eleventh-hour counterattack. With chat rooms, automatic weapons, Deepak Chopra, Zoloft, and vodka Martinis carving up Freud's domain, plain old-fashioned neurosis, and its treatment on the couch, are starting—at least in print—to look good again.

Jake Singer is the contentious analysand in Daniel Menaker's forthcoming first novel, **The Treatment** (Knopf), parts of which have appeared in these pages. Dr. Ernesto Morales, Jake's Cuban analyst, runs a session like Che Guevara leading a guerrilla unit through a mountain pass; to Jake, he "was a madman privateer for whom conservative Freudianism was merely a flag of convenience." Spanning the years from Watergate to Reagan, the novel finds Jake at loggerheads with family, fate, desire, and, most of all, with the formidable Dr. Morales. In the end, Jake never admits that the self-described "Last Freudian" has helped him through his impasse, but the reader knows better.

Dr. Morales would be pleased to learn that the flaws of Freudian theory are now alluringly called "tensions" and "contradictions," as three recent books from Harvard University Press attest. John Forrester, a historian of psychoanalysis, offers **Dispatches from the Freud Wars**, a valuable collection of essays which finds Freud's work as rich and controversial as ever; in **Questions for Freud: The Secret History of Psychoanalysis**, Nicholas Rand and Maria Torok launch a rehabilitative critique by using Freud's own methods on him; and Mari Jo Buhle weighs in with **Feminism and Its Discontents**, an effort to assuage the long-standing unease between Freudianism and feminism.

Adam Phillips, an eminent British Freudian and belletrist, examines the insatiable—sometimes beastly—curiosity of children in his lively study **The Beast in the Nursery** (Pantheon). And, speaking of kids, Esther Freud, Sigmund's great-granddaughter, has just published her third novel, **Summer at Gaglow** (Ecco), an appropriately observant and intricate tale of family life.

RUSSELL CHRISTIAN

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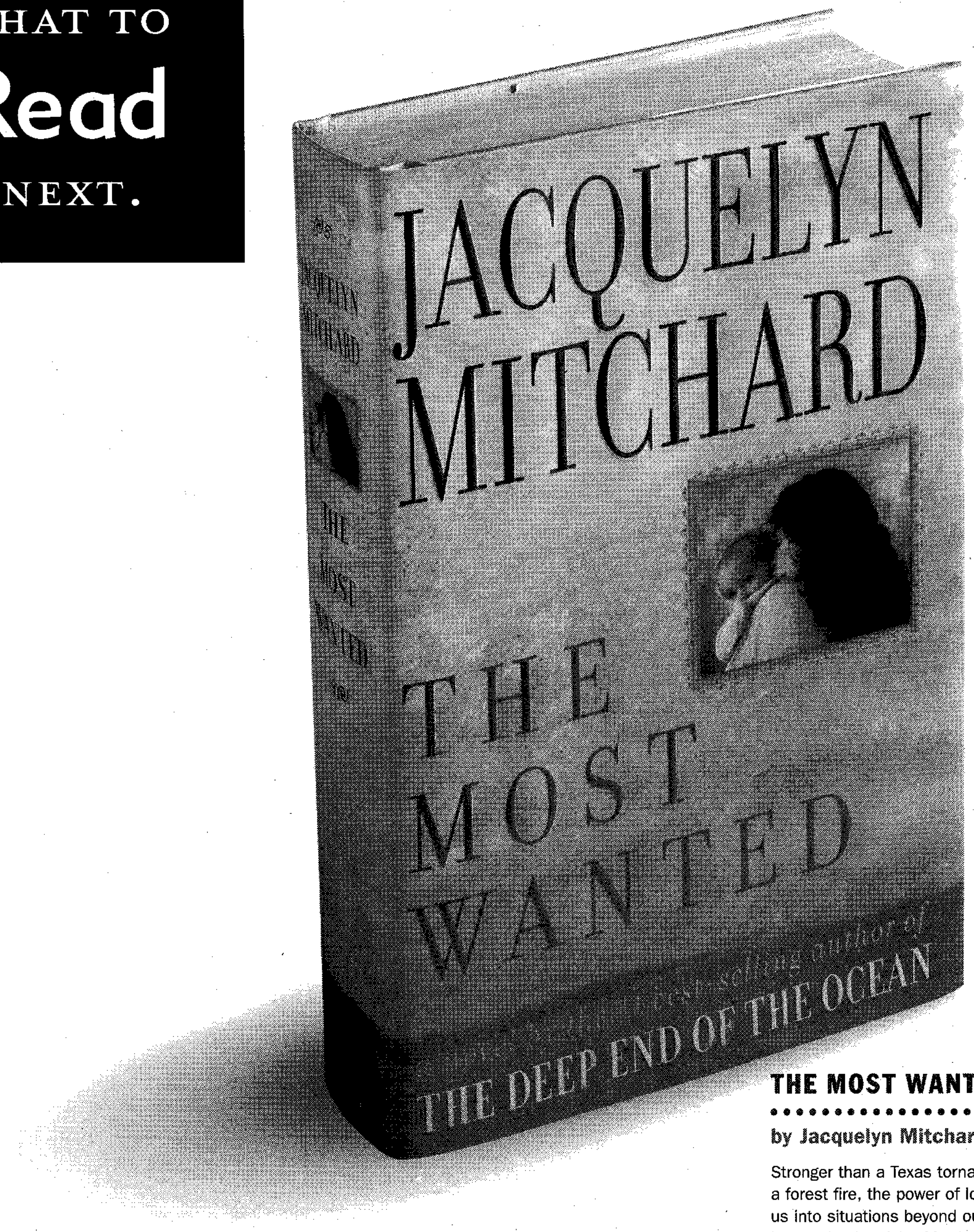

THE MOST WANTED

by Jacquelyn Mitchard

Stronger than a Texas tornado, hotter than a forest fire, the power of love can catapult us into situations beyond our control. This is exactly what Arley Mowbray, a young lady from South Texas, finds out when she falls for Dillon LeGrande, a fierce outlaw. From the author of the bestselling *The Deep End of the Ocean* comes a tale of reckless love-on-the-run. (Viking)

Publisher's Price: $24.95 Discount **30%**

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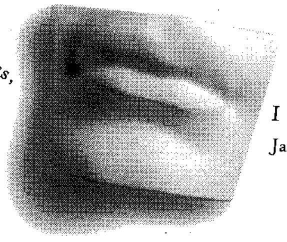
Chat with Jacquelyn Mitchard on Live Chat on America Online. Friday, May 22nd 8:00 PM, Eastern. AOL Keyword: Events



When I dream of the kiss, I don't hear the fire.

Jacquelyn Mitchard, *The Most Wanted*

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"INVENTORS + ALCHEMISTS"—A group show of contemporary tintypes, photographs, and other objects. Through June 14. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767.)

"MOTHERHOOD"—An offbeat illustration of the matriarchal mind-set, by such artists as Gertrude Käsebier, Clarence White, Marvin E. Newman, Gordon Coster, Grancel Fitz, and Esther Bubley. Through June 6. (De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"Robert Capa: Photographs," a retrospective of the war correspondent's career. Through June 7. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—**JED FIELDING**, Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays; through May 23. . . . **SALLY GALL**, Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Through May 22. . . . **RUDY GIULIANI**, Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Opens Saturdays at noon; through June 13. . . . **ARNO RAFAEL MINKKINEN** and **LYNN STERN**, Friedman, 32 E. 67th St. 794-8950. Both shows through June 19. . . . **MARION POST WOLCOTT** and **SEBASTIÃO SALGADO**, Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Both shows through May 23. . . . **EUGENE RICHARDS**, Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6; through May 30. . . . **WALTER ROSENBLUM**, Queens College, Kissena Blvd. and Melbourne Ave., Flushing. 718-997-4747. Open Mondays through Thursdays, 11 to 7; through May 28. . . . **ANTONIO TUROK**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through June 21. . . . **JO ANN VERBURG**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223. Through June 27. . . . **BOB WILLOUGHBY**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223. Through May 23.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the New York Public Library.)

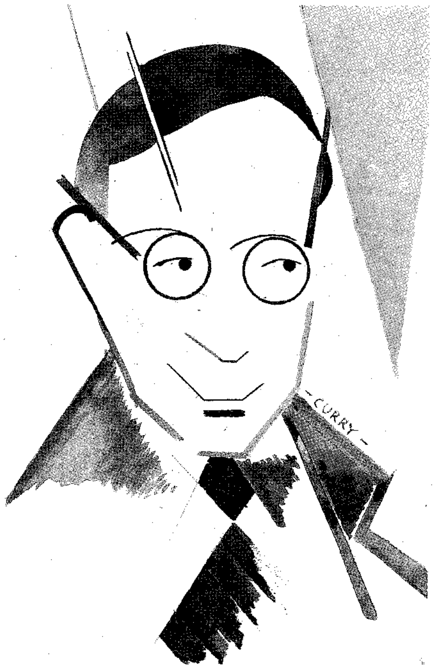
CLASSICAL MUSIC

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Kurt Masur conducting. May 21-23 at 8: Shostakovich's Symphony No. 7, the "Leningrad," which was inspired by the courage of that city's residents in the course of the nine-hundred-day siege during the Second World War. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.) . . . ¶ May 25 at 8: Excerpts from Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. No tickets necessary.)

ORCHESTRA OF THE S.E.M. ENSEMBLE—This intrepid group of "post-Cageians" offers premières of works by Roscoe Mitchell and Petr Kotik, as well as Morton Feldman's "For Samuel Beckett" and excerpts from Handel's "Solomon." (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 20 at 8.)

EOS ORCHESTRA—Stravinsky's influence was pervasive among mid-century American composers—think of Irving Fine, Arthur Berger, and Leonard Bernstein—but one of the most respected acolytes among them, Alexei Haieff (1914-1994), has fallen into nearly total obscurity. His works, which include several ballet scores, three symphonies, two piano concertos, and a good deal of chamber music, have all but disappeared from concert programs, and his name would not even figure in the Schwann Opus recordings catalogue if the Eos Ensemble (the current group's predecessor) hadn't included his wry "Princess Zondilda and her Entourage" on a disk it released last year (on the BMG Catalyst label), spotlighting music written for Merce Cunningham ballets. In this concert, Jonathan Sheffer hopes to restore the composer's reputation by leading not only "Princess Zondilda," but also his "Eclogue (La Nouvelle Heloïse)" for harp and strings and his Divertimento, as well as Stravinsky's "Pulcinella" (staged, with dancer Sean Curran, mezzo-soprano Paula Rasmussen, tenor Carl Halvorson, and baritone Andrew Schroeder). (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. May 21 at 8. For information about tickets, call 691-6415.)



The music of Alexei Haieff, performed by Eos Orchestra at the Ethical Culture Society.

CHRIS CURRY

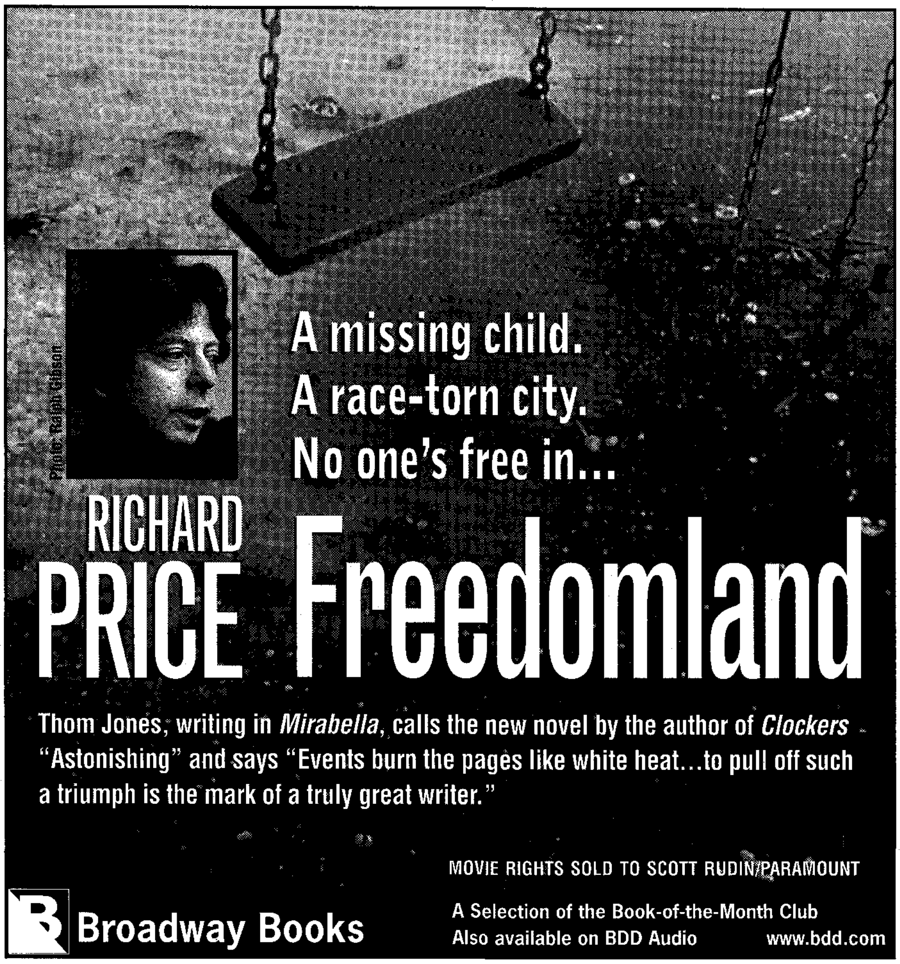
JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA—In the conservatory's commencement concert, Jorge Mester conducts Dohnányi's "Symphonic Minutes," Chopin's Piano Concerto in F Minor (with Grace Hsiao-Ching Chung), and Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade." (Alice Tully Hall. May 21 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

SUNDAYS ON THE ISLAND—Removed from the cultural bustle of mid-Manhattan, this concert series has provided worthy performances to City Island, the Bronx's maritime outpost, every Sunday for the past five years. Restaurateur, innkeeper, and devoted flutist Pierre Saint-Denis hosts the concerts (with a minimal entry fee) at his way-uptown bed-and-breakfast, either in the main lounge or in an outbuilding; pianist Ilan Rechtman serves as impresario, juggling an ever-changing roster that includes both young soloists on the rise and more established musicians. The series celebrates its fifth anniversary with a program by the City Island Baroque Ensemble (its resident chamber orchestra) that includes Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante (K. 364, with violinist David Kim and violist Rebecca Young) and arias by Handel, Haydn, and Mozart (featuring the Israeli soprano Cleo Reiss). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. May 24 at noon.)

BRONX ARTS ENSEMBLE ORCHESTRA—Michael J. Buglio conducts an all-American program that includes several works by Gershwin. (Woodlawn Cemetery, Jerome and Bainbridge Aves., the Bronx. May 24 at 2. No tickets necessary.)

AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA—Tan Dun leads his own "Red Forecast" (with soprano Susan Botti), as well as works by Derek Bermel and Michael Gordon. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 24 at 3.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY—Jens Nygaard conducts benefit performances of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. May 25 at 2 and 7. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)



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Thom Jones, writing in *Mirabella*, calls the new novel by the author of *Clockers* "Astonishing" and says "Events burn the pages like white heat...to pull off such a triumph is the mark of a truly great writer."

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RECITALS

Essential Music—The ensemble presents Morton Feldman's "Crippled Symmetry." (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. May 20 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Cecilia Dunoyer, Mariko Sato, and **Cheryl Tschanz**—These three pianists share a recital of twentieth-century works: selections from Messiaen's "Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus," Debussy's "Images" (Book One), Boulez's "Notations," Ravel's "Valses Nobles et Sentimentales," and works by Izumi Nakagawa (a première) and Tonicka Ichinose. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. May 20 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Playing Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos No. 1, No. 2, and No. 4. (Temple Emanu-el, Fifth Ave. at 65th St. May 21 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—Presenting the sextet from Strauss's "Capriccio," Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht," and Dvořák's A-Major Sextet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. May 21 at 7:30 and May 24 at 4.)

New Jakarta Ensemble—Formed in 1996 by the Javanese composer Tony Prabowo and five West Sumatran percussionists, this group purveys new works based on the traditions of the Indonesian gamelan, "composing" original pieces by meticulously honing improvisations through the course of extensive rehearsals. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. May 21 at 8.)

William Brown—Tenor, with colleagues, in works by Olly Wilson, William Banfield, Leroy Jenkins (a première), and Dorothy Rudd Moore. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. May 21 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—This primus inter pares of piano trios is about to undergo a double personnel change—far from its first since its founding in 1955 but one that promises to radically alter the group's sound. The pianist Menahem Pressler, the only remaining founding member, will continue in the new formation, but in the coming season violinist Ida Kavafian (a member since 1992) will cede her chair to Young Uk Kim, and cellist Peter Wiley (who has held up the bass line since 1987) will yield his place to Antonio Meneses. These last New York appearances of the "old ensemble" are given over to Haydn's G-Major Trio (the "Gypsy Rondo"), Mendelssohn's C-Minor Trio, and Shostakovich's "Seven Songs on Poems by Aleksander Blok" (with soprano Marina Shaguch). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 22-23 at 8.)

Salon Soirées—The Jerusalem Piano Trio plays Haydn's Trio in G-Major (the "Gypsy Rondo"), and soprano Cleo Reiss performs songs by Fauré, Schubert, and Brahms. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. May 24 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Music at the Morgan—James Levine conducts Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire" (the manuscript of which resides in the collection of the Morgan Library) and Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat"; with soprano Christine Schäfer, pianist Peter Serkin, and members of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347. May 26 at 6:15.)

Prism Quartet—Performing saxophone quartets by Cage, Carter, Wuorinen, and Berio, among others. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. May 26 at 8. For information about tickets, call 666-2228.)

Pedro Carbone and Nancy Fabiola Herrera—The pianist and the mezzo-soprano perform works by Oscar Esplá (1886-1976), a central figure in the administration of this century's Spanish musical politics. As a composer, Esplá reveals a curious mixture of influences: after studying with Reger and Saint-Saëns, he developed a personal style that displays his kinship with Debussy and Stravinsky while often incorporating an original nine-note scale he derived from the folk music of Spain's southern coast. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. May 26 at 8.)

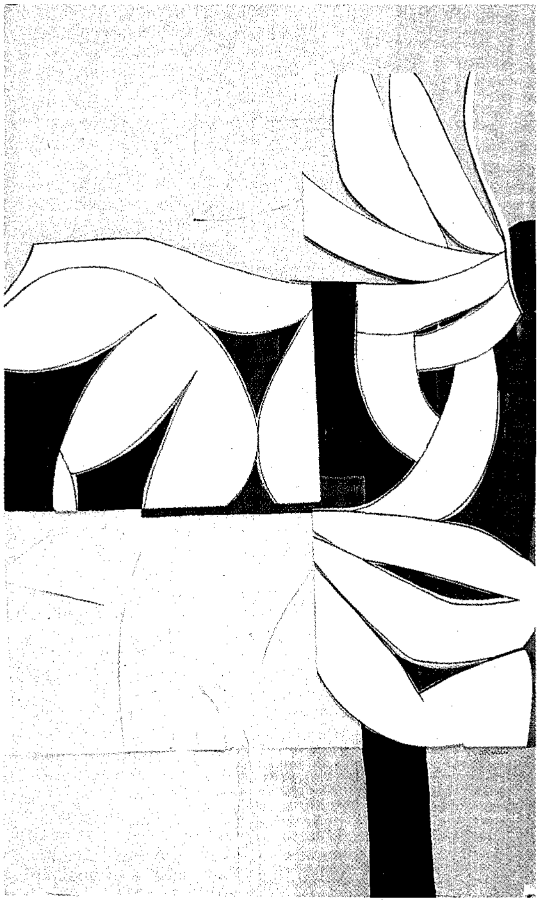
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Smart Steps—Except for the occasional executive sprinting to catch the 5:18 express, the spectacle of runners dressed in business attire racing down the street is not a common one. But on May 20 at 6:30 the financial district will be teeming with sweating suits—business garb, including briefcases, is required for those competing for prizes in the New York Road Runners Club's annual Wall Street Rat Race. The race is two and a half miles long, encompassing such landmarks as the Stock Exchange and the U.S. Customs House; it ends with free beer for all finishers. Awards go to the winner as well as to the best dressed. For more information, call 860-4455.

Readings—May 20 at 7: By actors Harris Yulin, B. D. Wong, and Joanne Woodward, from the stories of Tobias Wolff, Ha Jin, and Karen E. Bender, from "The Best American Short Stories 1997." Series editor Katrina Kenison introduces the evening. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ May 20 at 8: By novelist Michael Ondaatje and poet Robert Creeley. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ May 23 at 3: By Dale Peck, from his novel "Now It's Time to Say Goodbye," and Heather Lewis, from her novel "The Second Suspect." (Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. No Tickets necessary.)

Talks—May 20 at 7: Director Terry Gilliam discusses the filming of "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 21 at 6:30: John Gauntner, author of "The Sake Handbook," gives the lowdown on the Japanese rice wine. A tasting follows the talk. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015.)

Vista—Urban Park Rangers open the door to the top of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Arch in Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza, offering spectacular views of Prospect Park and Manhattan, one hundred and three steps above the ground. (Saturdays and Sundays, from noon to 5. Through July 5. For more information, call 718-965-8954.)



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Judith Rothschild, *Bathers IV*, 1977

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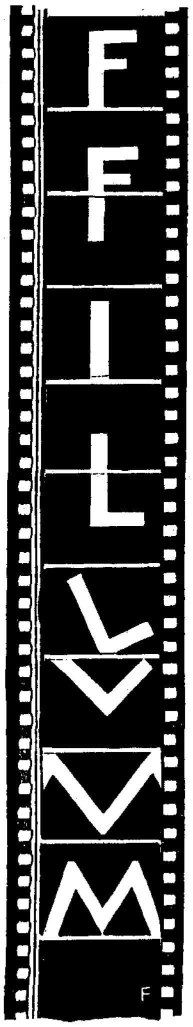

OPENINGS

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas—Hunter S. Thompson's 1971 novel, directed by Terry Gilliam, with Johnny Depp and Benicio Del Toro. Opening May 22. (Art Greenwich Twin, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas.)

Godzilla—The giant monster descends on Manhattan. Directed by Roland Emmerich, with Matthew Broderick and Jean Reno. Opening May 20. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

Still Breathing—A romantic drama, written and directed by James F. Robinson, with Brendan Fraser and Joanna Going. Opening May 22. (Sutton and Village East Cinemas.)

Tokyo Fist—Writer-director Shinya Tsukamoto stars in this tale of two men in love with the same woman. In Japanese. Opening May 22. (Cinema Village.)

Under the Skin—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening May 22. (Angelika Film Center and Sutton.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Artemisia—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema II.)

Character—Winner of the Academy Award for best foreign film, this grimly absorbing tale of a father and son engaged in murderous conflict has the look of a Rembrandt, full of chiaroscuro and silvery-brown hues. The film, set in Rotterdam in the twenties, brilliantly evokes a confined, class-ridden society ruled by smug burghers as well as the nooselike feel of fate closing in. Katadreuffe (Fedja van Huet) is the illegitimate son of a silent, hardworking mother (Betty Schuurman) and the despised town bailiff (Jan Decleir) she has refused to marry. Katadreuffe's intense ambition enables him to rise in a prestigious law firm, despite a lack of education and money, but everywhere he turns he comes up against the shadow of his father, who seems to have passed on to him his own driven but isolated character. A fascinatingly layered meditation on the limits of free will, the film moves at a Dickensian pace, amassing the weight of its particular world and gaining power as it goes along. Decleir, with his fishy blue eyes, is remarkable as the hateful but finally poignant ur-father. Directed by Mike van Diem. In Dutch.—*Daphne Merkin* (5/11/98) (62nd & Broadway.)

Chinese Box—Wayne Wang's elegant, sorrowful valentine to his native city of Hong Kong, set in the period just before the Crown Colony was to revert to Chinese control. The film stars Jeremy Irons as a British expatriate journalist and Gong Li as the gravely beautiful, elusive woman he loves. After the journalist is diagnosed with a fatal illness, he quits his job and, with a photojournalist friend (Ruben Blades), wanders the underside of Hong Kong—the brothels, the betting parlors, and the markets where animals are slaughtered—with his video camera. The film is extraordinary to look at for its ingenious mixture of visual styles, and it will speak to anyone who has ever tried to take possession of a place in the hope of taking possession of himself. In English and Cantonese.—*D.M.* (4/20/98) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

City of Angels—In this slick, good-looking adaptation of Wim Wenders' "Wings of Desire," Meg Ryan, America's favorite child-woman, plays Maggie Rice, a heart surgeon who opens her baby blues wide and cries a lot, and Nicolas Cage is Seth, an angel with an unblinking stare who falls in love with her. Seth eventually makes the radical decision to become human, and he and Maggie have a romantic time of it in her uncle's glamorous little cottage on Lake Tahoe. But, sure enough, tragedy beckons, the better for Seth to announce in doomed-lover style, "I would rather have had one breath of her hair, one kiss of her mouth, one touch of her hand—than an eternity without it."—*D.M.* (Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Clockwatchers—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center.)

Deep Impact—A dire warning that should concern us all. You may feel safe in your bed, but beware: even as you sleep, Earth is under threat from a vast, overheated surplus of character actors. How can they all fit into one silly movie? Could anyone really have Vanessa Redgrave and Maximilian Schell for her parents and still turn out, you know, O.K.? What is Robert Duvall doing in space? And, finally, just how deeply do you want Morgan Freeman to be President? All these questions are answered by Mimi Leder's clumpy apocalypse flick, in which our planet is approached by an enormous, flame-grilled asteroid with extra cheese. A party of astronauts is dispatched to divide the rock into manageable pieces, but one chunk still makes it through and splashes down off the East Coast; the resulting tidal wave, though undeniably destructive, resembles a giant Elvis quiff. Téa Leoni, playing a TV reporter, tries heroically to make light of the menace, but the tearful script finally wears her down.—*Anthony Lane* (5/18/98) (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly.)

A Friend of the Deceased—An engagingly laconic film about life in the new, Ronald Lauderized Ukraine. A despondent translator (Alexandre Lazarev) hires a contract killer to put a hit on him—and then has a change of heart. The film, lovingly shot by Vilen Kaluta ("Burnt by the Sun"), abounds in photogenic tristesse—it's as though a Camus character wandered into a super-capitalist culture where everything depends on the price of oranges. The story's theme is the disappearance of friendship into the "glorious Soviet past," and its replacement by business relationships, but the real pleasure comes from small educational details, such as the revelation that Earl Grey tea is in high demand in the Ukraine, along with Pampers. In Russian.—*D.M.* (5/11/98) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Go Now—Robert Carlyle stars in this surprisingly unsentimental tale about a young construction worker with multiple sclerosis and the effect his condition has on the people who love him. There's more black humor than you might expect in the low-key script, and the director, Michael Winterbottom, keeps the scenes crisp and engaging. Carlyle's performance is so sexy and quietly moving that the film has an intimacy rarely seen in illness dramas; there's no noble suffering here, just a courageous attempt to get on with things.—*Bruce Diones* (Regency.)

The Hanging Garden—The Canadian filmmaker Thom Fitzgerald has woven a darkly comic Irish melodrama about a young gay man who returns home for his sister's wedding and recalls the abusive years he spent as an obese teen-ager with his family. The story soon becomes a surrealistic mix of fantasy (he remains at home and commits suicide) and reality (he leaves and establishes a normal life). Fitzgerald's screenplay evokes compassion for characters that are troubled or ill, and the Catholic-boyhood haze that infuses much of the action is dizzingly precise. The movie is a lovingly shot, richly detailed pleasure.—*B.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

He Got Game—Spike Lee offers up more cliché-ridden street angst in this drama about a high-school basketball star (Milwaukee Bucks guard Ray Allen) who feels the pressure of the college draft while dealing with his anger toward his father (Denzel Washington), a convicted murderer. The film is gorgeously shot (slow-motion basketballs spin in the air like Kubrick's spaceships), and the majestic Aaron Copland score helps some of the images to soar, but Lee's screenplay, heavy-handed and didactic, gives the actors little room to convey any real emotions.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, Embassy 2, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Horse Whisperer—A girl called Grace (Scarlett Johansson) is involved in an accident with her horse, Pilgrim. Both are grievously injured: Grace loses a leg and Pilgrim loses his cool. They are then transported to Montana by Grace's determined mother (Kristin Scott Thomas), to seek out a man named Tom Booker (Robert Redford). "I help horses with people problems," Tom says, although he proves to be equally skilled at rejuvenating married women. The movie was directed by Redford himself, and the script is by Eric Roth and Richard LaGravenese: the latter made "The Bridges of Madison County" fit for human consumption, and he and Roth have almost pulled off the same trick with Nicholas Evans's nonsensical novel. The sticking point of the movie is its exorbitant length: two and three-quarter hours does seem like an awful long time to patch up a horse, and a movie that goes straight for your heart should not be allowed to fester. Still, Redford is as careful a director of actors as you will find these days; the sharpest scenes, oddly enough, are those between himself and the prickly Johansson, and there is strong support from Chris Cooper and Dianne Wiest. Some viewers may be bemused by the Scott Thomas character, an Englishwoman who cuts a swath through the world of New York magazine publishing. What kind of crazy fantasist dreamed *that* one up?—*A.L.* (Cinema I, Guild, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Les Misérables—Liam Neeson makes a strapping Jean Valjean, and Geoffrey Rush's Inspector Javert strikes a fine balance between fastidiousness and menace. But Billie August's version of the old chestnut is tasteful to a fault. It's all highly professional—and a trifle dull, like a tenor who sings his aria from note to note, winning points for technique but missing the larger tune. Uma Thurman wears thin as the desperate whore Fantine; dirty and emaciated, she bats her eyes like a first-class coquette. Adapted by Rafael Yglesias.—*Sarah Kerr* (Chelsea West, East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

My Favorite Year (1982)—The year is 1954, when Sid Caesar was the king of live TV comedy, and this movie is a fictional treatment of life backstage during the days when many soon-to-be-famous writers worked on his shows, brainstorming together. As the brawny, truculent King Kaiser, Joe Bologna suggests an introverted ox, and Peter O'Toole is King's guest star from Hollywood—the notorious womanizing boozer Alan Swann, who is part John Barrymore and part Errol Flynn. Bologna has an authentic boss-comic aura, and O'Toole is simply astounding. Ravaged and liquefied as Swann is, he still has his feelers out—he's always aware of the impression he's making; even when Swann is drunk, he's acting a great actor drunk. This show-business farce is the first film directed by Richard Benjamin, and it's a creaky job of moviemaking, but it has a bubbling spirit. From a terrific script by Norman Steinberg (who appears in a bit as Sandy) and Dennis Palumbo.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum 2; May 22-23.)

Petulia (1968)—This harsh, tender, and whimsical romance about a divorced surgeon named Archie (George C. Scott) and a married "kook" named Petulia (Julie Christie) is one of the most enduringly controversial movies to emerge from the swinging sixties. It's not just a love-it-or-hate-it kind of film. You can disagree with its fatalistic attitude toward marriage and still be moved by the mixed emotions that flood the faces of Scott and Shirley Knight (who plays his ex-wife); you can cringe at its heavy-handed portrayal of urban anomie and still respect its willingness to condemn the self-absorption of both the hippies and the bourgeoisie in San Francisco around the time of the Summer of Love. The movie is about a couple who are stirred to break through the clutter and distraction of their lives and share some moments of authentic feeling. That's what the filmmakers—director Richard Lester, cinematographer Nicholas Roeg, and editor Antony Gibbs—do, too. Leonard B. Marcus wrote the often witty script, from Barbara Turner's adaptation of the novel "Me and the Arch Kook Petulia," by John Haase. With Richard Chamberlain as Petulia's frustrated, pretty-boy husband.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; May 21 and May 24.)

The President's Analyst (1967)—James Coburn, as the psychoanalyst to the President of the United States, is pursued by a Russian spy (Severn Darden), an American agent (Godfrey Cambridge), and everybody else. This erratic political spoof, written and directed by Theodore Flicker, has sly, ingenious sequences (one involves a super-automated phone company) and sour sequences (William Daniels as the head of an upper-middle-class liberal family obsessed with the threat of right-wing neighbors). Very lively when Flicker is just making sophomoric jokes, but he doesn't seem to know what he's good at, or how to stick to it.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; May 22 and May 25.)

Sliding Doors—Gwyneth Paltrow dons an accent and a dose of English reserve to play Helen, an unfulfilled Londoner who works in public relations. One day as she's running to catch a train she bumps her head and splits into two parallel lives. In one, she goes home to her caddish boyfriend and continues with her depressing life; in the alternative, she finds him cheating on her, leaves, starts her own business, gets a smashing new hairdo, and takes up with the nice guy she deserves (John Hannah, a charming Scot with thick brows). Paltrow is radiant, but she keeps picking parts that focus on technical skills—she has yet to perform the real star's trick of being herself. Peter Howitt wrote and directed the likable, shallow script.—*S.K.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Spanish Prisoner—A young inventor (Campbell Scott) dreams up something called "the Process" that is destined to bring untold wealth to his bosses but not to himself. When he airs this grievance to a businessman whom he meets in the Caribbean (Steve Martin), he finds himself enmeshed in a plot from which there is no escape, unless you count the suspiciously

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(bī′ō-dĭ-vûr′sĭ-tē) *n.* The spectacular variety of life on Earth, and the essential interdependence among all living things. (*See* the new Hall of Biodiversity opening May 30 at the American Museum of Natural History.)

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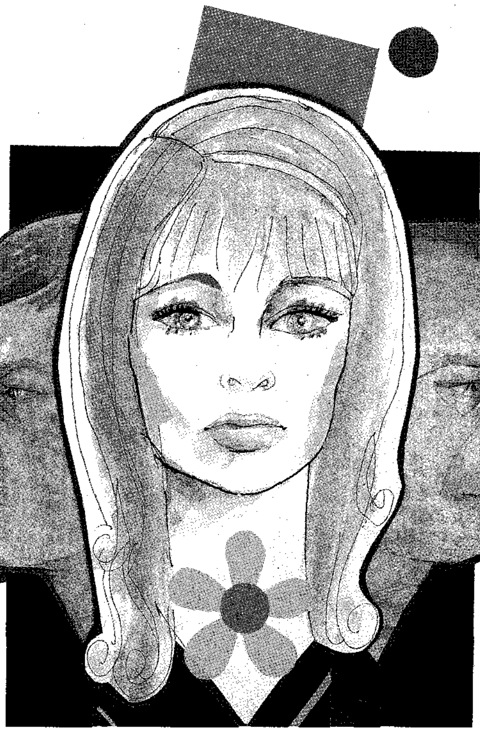
loving attentions of a fellow-employee (Rebecca Pidgeon). If you're prepared to ignore the plot's absurdities, David Mamet's film is addictive, and Carter Burwell's score works on you like a massage. The film also offers the sharpest and most quizzical work that Steve Martin has turned in for some time.—*A.L.* (4/13/98) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



At MOMA, Richard Chamberlain, Julie Christie, and George C. Scott in Richard Lester's "Petulia."

CORNEL RUBINO

Two Girls and a Guy—Written and directed by James Toback, who, since the 1978 "Fingers," has busied himself with tales of obsessive behavior. This latest effort is set almost entirely in a New York apartment, owned by an actor named Blake (Robert Downey, Jr.), who comes home to discover that the two women he has been dating—Carla (Heather Graham) and Lou (Natasha Gregson Wagner)—have broken into his place. The movie is an exercise in vigorous self-exculpation, and Blake almost gets away with it. The trouble is that you don't believe the setup—why would the girls hang around while the guy tries to win them back? What rescues the whole enterprise is the presence of Downey, whose mood dances between the frivolous and the hunted; it's not his best role, but it answers to all that is seductive and untrustworthy in his eyes. The opening music, by the way, is Brahms—the climax of his Horn Trio, which is the best joke in the movie.—*A.L.* (4/27/98 & 5/4/98) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Village East Cinemas.)

Wilde—Brian Gilbert's look at the downfall of Oscar Wilde opens with the writer (Stephen Fry) as a happy young man on a lecture tour of the American West, descending into a coal mine and addressing an audience of bare-chested, illiterate young men. It's a delightful scene, which gets at Wilde's famous wit, the poignance of his susceptibility to human—i.e., male—beauty, and the extraordinary contours of his celebrity. But the moment Wilde returns to London the film resorts to clichés. Julian Mitchell's script paints the playwright as a sober family man lured away from respectable married life by a series of male seducers. Fry is a perfect physical match for the giant dandy, and impossible not to like; Jude Law is exquisite as Lord Alfred Douglas, the sultry *homme fatal* for whom Wilde sacrifices everything. But the filmmakers' square view of the flamboyant Wilde approach robs the story of its tragic quirkiness. Wilde becomes just another man who can't help himself—as if this were a kind of gay rehash of "The Blue Angel."—*S.K.* (Paris and Quad Cinema.)

ALSO PLAYING

AS GOOD AS IT GETS (reviewed in our issue of 1/5/98): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE BIG HIT:** 84th Street Sixplex, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE BIG LEBOWSKI** (3/23/98): Metro Cinema. . . . **BULWORTH:** Ziegfeld. . . . **THE BUTCHER BOY** (4/6/98): Angelika Film Center and Beekman. . . . **DÉJÀ VU:** 59th Street East Cinema and Quad Cinema. . . . **FIREWORKS** (3/30/98): Film Forum. . . . **THE KINGDOM, PART 2:** Film Forum. . . . **THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MARIUS AND JEANNETTE:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **MEN WITH GUNS:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE OBJECT OF MY AFFECTION:** First & 62nd Cinemas and Park & 86th Street Cinemas. . . . **A PRICE ABOVE RUBIES:** New York Twin. . . . **QUEST FOR CAMELOT:** Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **TITANIC** (12/15/97): Embassy 3, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **WILD MAN BLUES:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and The Screening Room. . . . **WILD THINGS:** Criterion Center. . . . **WOO:** 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—May 20-21: "How to Marry a Millionaire" (1953, Jean Negulesco) and "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" (1967, David Swift). . . . May 22-23: "The Producers" (1968, Mel Brooks) and "My Favorite Year" (†). . . . May 24-25: "Barefoot in the Park" (1967, Gene Saks) and "Sunday in New York" (1963, Peter Tewksbury). . . . May 26-27: A program of animated films made in New York City by the Max Fleischer and the Van Beuren studios.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films made between 1966 and 1969. May 21 and May 24 at 2:30: "Petulia" (†). . . . May 21 at 6: "Funny Girl" (1968, William Wyler). . . . May 22 at 2:30: "Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed" (1968, Alexander Kluge; in German). . . . May 22 at 6 and May 25 at 5: "The President's Analyst" (†). . . . May 22 at 8: "Lucia" (1969, Humberto Solás; a Cuban film, in Spanish). . . . May 23 at 2 and May 25 at noon: "Monterey Pop" (1968, D. A. Pennebaker). . . . May 23 at 5: "Point Blank" (1967, John Boorman). . . . May 24 at 5 and May 26 at 2: "When I Am Dead and Gone" (1968, Zivojin Paclovic; in Serbo-Croatian). . . . May 25 at 2:30: "Who's That Knocking at My Door?" (1968, Martin Scorsese). . . . May 26 at 6: "Night of the Living Dead" (1968, George A. Romero). . . . ¶ May 21 at 6: One program in a series about the history of 8-mm. films and videos in the United States. . . . ¶ May 21 at 6:30 and May 22 at 3: "Madame E." (1997, Lasse Maukkarinen). . . . ¶ Through May 31: A program of films from Finland; in Finnish, with English subtitles.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through May 27: A program of films from Argentina; in Spanish, with English subtitles. . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. May 23-24 at 2: "Tic Tac" (1997, Rosa Vergés).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—May 23 at 2: "The Cool World" (1963, Shirley Clarke). . . . May 23 at 4:30: "All Over Me" (1997, Alex Sichel). . . . May 24 at 2: "Greetings" (1968, Brian De Palma). . . . May 24 at 4: "You're a Big Boy Now" (1966, Francis Ford Coppola).

Ninth Annual Dusty Awards—May 20, from noon to 6: A free showing of award-winning films and videos by graduating students of the School of Visual Arts. (Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.)

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 26 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Banana Peel" (1963, Marcel Ophüls; in French).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). May 24 at 7, the feature will be "Baby Face" (1933, Alfred E. Green).

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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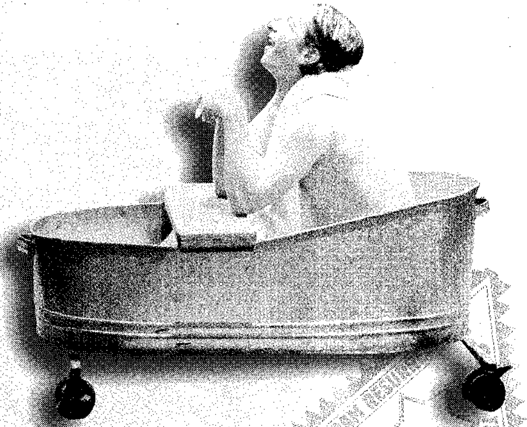
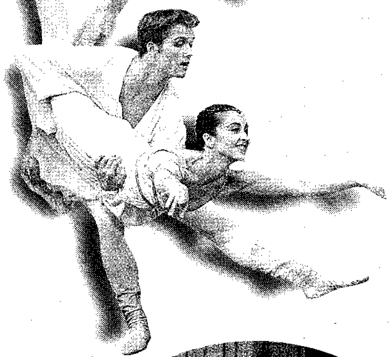
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.





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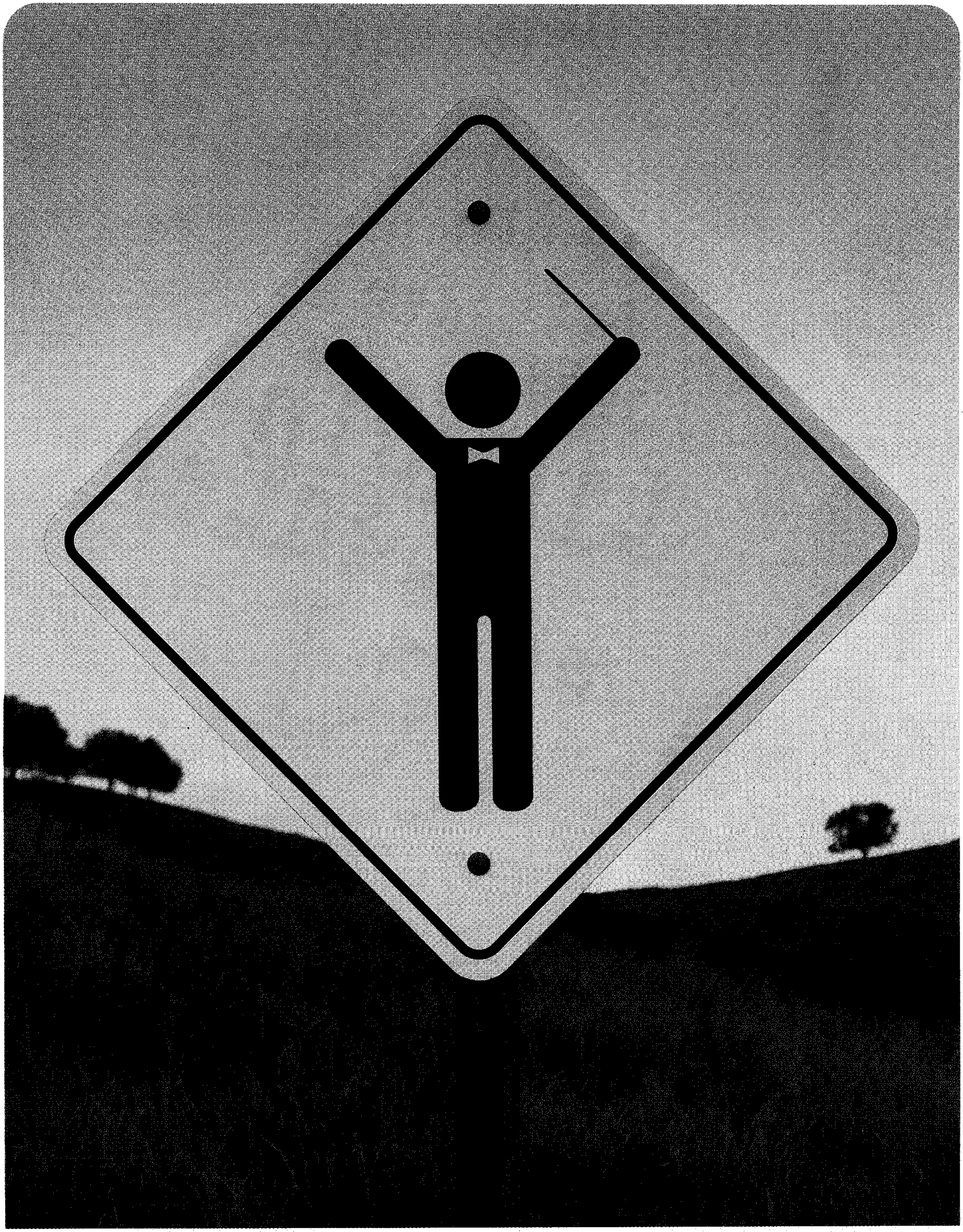

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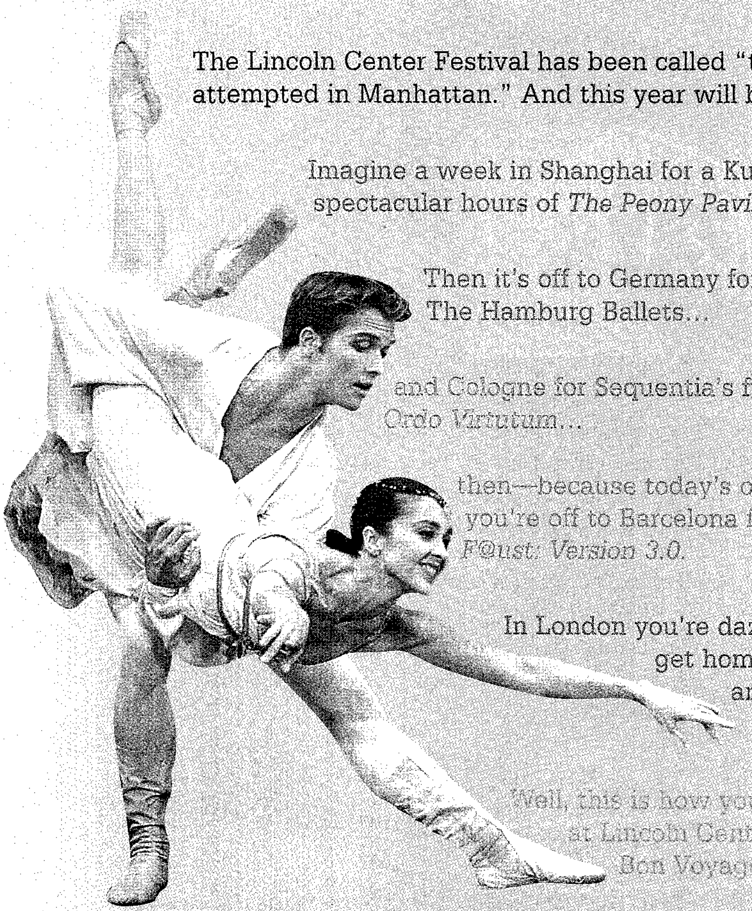

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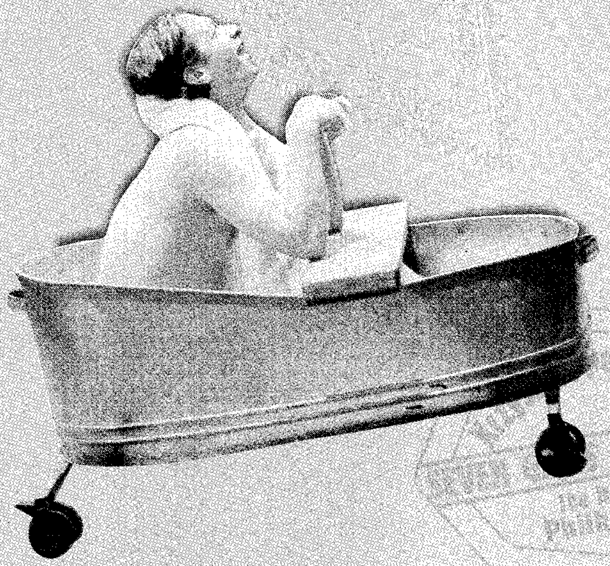

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Avery Fisher Hall July 17, 18 at 8 P.M.
Tickets: $55, $40, $35, $20

Major support for the Tribute to Israel provided by the Kenneth & Evelyn Lipper Foundation
Additional support from Vivian and Norman Belmonte and the Nash Family Foundation

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Sequentia
ORDO VIRTUTUM
by Hildegard von Bingen

It is not every day that a musical play by a nine-hundred-year-old abbess, poet, and composer goes platinum. The brilliant early music group Sequentia, founded by Barbara Ann Thornton and Benjamin Bagby (whose *Beowulf* was a Festival 97 sellout), presents a fully staged production of *Ordo Virtutum,* arguably the world's first opera. Sequentia will perform *Ordo Virtutum* at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle as it might have been performed by the women in von Bingen's convent in the Middle Ages.

Church of
St. Paul the Apostle
July 7, 9, 10 at 8:30 P.M.
Tickets: $40 (reserved)
$25 (unreserved)
Note: Please arrive early
for unreserved seating.

SEQUENTIA
ORDO VIRTUTUM
GERMANY

Hildegurls
THE ELECTRONIC ORDO VIRTUTUM

Four cutting-edge, New York-based composers/singers Eve Beglarian, Kitty Brazelton, Elaine Kaplinsky, and Lisa Bielawa bring twenty-first-century perspectives to bear on this twelfth-century work. Hildegurls' irreverent version of *Ordo Virtutum* offers a downtown contrast to Sequentia's authentic re-creation of the same work.

Clark Studio Theater
July 22, 24, 25 at 8 P.M.
Tickets: $25 (unreserved)

PATIENCE & SARAH
by Paula M. Kimper and Wende Persons

A co-production of Lincoln Center Festival and American Opera Projects

Patience & Sarah is based on the cult novel of the same name by Isabel Miller, inspired by the American primitive painter Mary Ann Willson. It is a romantic story of two early nineteenth-century women who settled together in upstate New York. Tuneful and melodic in the tradition of Susanna, *Patience & Sarah* is a fully staged folk opera. Paula M. Kimper has composed beautiful songs for two women's voices, and the opera breaks new ground with its resolute presentation of this love story.

John Jay College Theater
July 8, 10, 11 at 7:30 P.M.
Tickets: $40

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THE ART OF PERFORMANCE: LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL 98

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July 7 to July 26.

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

DANCE

Stuttgart Ballet
Romeo and Juliet
Onegin

Hamburg Ballet
†*Bernstein Dances*
All Our Yesterdays

OPERA

Patience and Sarah*
An American folk opera
co-produced with American
Opera Projects.

Shanghai Kunju Opera Company
*Peony Pavilion***
A 400-year-old Chinese opera
performed in 6 individual episodes
as a 22-hour marathon.

THEATER

††The Gesher Theatre***
Adam Resurrected
by Alexander Chervinsy
(in Hebrew and Russian)

Village (*K'far*)
by Joshua Sobol
(in Hebrew)

Theatre de Complicité
††*The Street of Crocodiles***
by Bruno Schulz

La Fura dels Baus
*F@ust: Version 3.0***
Goethe masterpiece reinterpreted for
the new millenium

Lincoln Center Theater
Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*
or *What You Will*

MUSIC

The New York Philharmonic
Kurt Masur, Music Director
†Bernstein - *Jeremiah Symphony**
*Age of Anxiety**
††Penderecki -*Seven Gates of Jerusalem:*
*An Oratorio***

Sequentia
Hildegard von Bingen
Ordo Virtutum

Complete Organ Works of J.S. Bach
A 14-concert series

†***Festival Theme:*** Salute to Leonard Bernstein
††***Festival Theme:*** In honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the State of Israel

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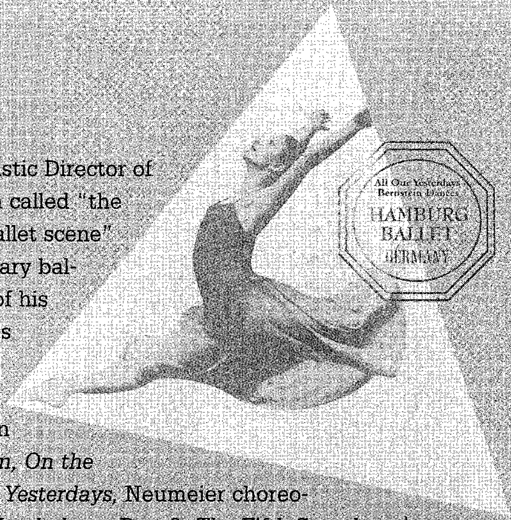
THE HAMBURG BALLET

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS
July 14, 16, 17 at 8 P.M.

BERNSTEIN DANCES
July 15 at 8 P.M., July 18 at 2 P.M. and 8 P.M.



American John Neumeier, Artistic Director of The Hamburg Ballet, has been called "the shooting star of the German Ballet scene" by *Dance Now*. His contemporary ballets match the grand themes of his favorite composers. Neumeier's *Bernstein Dances* is a "ballet revue" with costumes designed by Giorgio Armani. It is as much filled with the spirit of Leonard Bernstein as it is filled with music from all stages of his career, including *Candide, Peter Pan, On the Town, Mass, Wonderful Town,* and *West Side Story.* In a second program, *All Our Yesterdays,* Neumeier choreographs ballet to the music of Gustav Mahler (Part 1: *Soldier Songs/Des Knaben Wunderhorn;* Part 2: *The Fifth Symphony).*

Accompanied by the New York City Opera Orchestra
New York State Theater
Tickets: $60, $50, $40, $20

Support for The Hamburg Ballet provided by The Harkness Foundation for Dance

BERNSTEIN: COMPOSER & CHAMPION

The New York Philharmonic

Kurt Masur, Music Director

In keeping with Lincoln Center Festival's tradition of honoring an American composer each season, the Festival pays tribute to the late, beloved composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein. This series blends Bernstein's orchestral music with works by composers he championed.

Program A: July 7, 9 at 8 P.M.
Bernstein: *The Age of Anxiety* (Symphony No.2), Lukas Foss, pianist
Mahler: Symphony No.1
Program B: July 14, 15 at 8 P.M.
Ives: *Three Places in New England*
Gershwin: *Rhapsody in Blue,*
Fazil Say, pianist
Copland: Clarinet Concerto,
Stanley Drucker, clarinetist
Bernstein: *Jeremiah* (Symphony No.1),
Susanna Poretsky, mezzo-soprano

Avery Fisher Hall
Tickets: $55, $40, $35, $20

Major support for the New York Philharmonic provided by The Audrey and Martin Gruss Foundation with additional support from Mr. and Mrs. Murray L. Nathan

LITERALLY: BERNSTEIN

Eos Orchestra

The role literature played in the musical life of Leonard Bernstein is the theme of this concert. Conducted by Artistic Director Jonathan Sheffer, it will feature a world premiere concert performance of *Dybbuk*, originally created in 1974 by Bernstein for Jerome Robbins. Other works to be performed include *Serenade* and excerpts from *Songfest*, featuring soloists Angelina Réaux, Anne Akiko Meyers, and Chris Pedro Trakas.

Alice Tully Hall
July 20 at 8:30 P.M. Tickets: $35

THE UNKNOWN BERNSTEIN

This program features a variety of small-scale works from the composer's "trunk" of theatrical works that were never fully produced or performed. Guest artists include cellist Carter Brey and flutist Paula Robison. Michael Barrett, music advisor to the Bernstein estate, will be music director for this intimate evening.

Alice Tully Hall
July 23 at 8:30 P.M. Tickets: $35

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Shanghai Kunju Opera Company

THE PEONY PAVILION

(Mudan Ting)

A co-production of Lincoln Center Festival, Festival d'Automne à Paris, the Sydney Festival, and the Hong Kong Arts Festival

"If music be the food of love" why not have both? The masterpiece of Kunju opera, *The Peony Pavilion*, by the "Shakespeare of China," Tang Xianzu, is performed in its entirety for the first time for modern audiences—an unparalleled twenty-two hour phantasmagorical spectacle about the love story of Beautiful Du and her dream lover. *The Peony Pavilion*, directed by Chen Shi-Zheng, is presented in six individual episodes, or as a weekend marathon. The action is continuous and the audience is encouraged to chat, eat (Chinese delights will be sold in the lobby), sip tea, and move in and out of the theatre as they please.

Episode 1: *The Interrupted Dream*	
July 7 at 6:30 P.M.	July 17 at 4 P.M.
Episode 2: *Pursuing the Dream*	
July 8 at 7 P.M.	July 17 at 8:30 P.M.
Episode 3: *Making Love to a Ghost*	
July 9 at 7 P.M.	July 18 at 2 P.M.
Episode 4: *Resurrection*	
July 10 at 7 P.M.	July 18 at 7 P.M.
Episode 5: *War Against the Mongols*	
July 11 at 7 P.M.	July 19 at 2 P.M.
Episode 6: *Reunion*	
July 12 at 7 P.M.	July 19 at 7 P.M.

Performed in Chinese with English and Chinese supertitles.

LaGuardia Theater
July 7–12, 17–19 (marathon)
Tickets: $35 per episode, marathon* $125
*any combination of ALL SIX episodes

Support for The Peony Pavilion provided by Albert Kunstadter Family Foundation, Lulu C. Wang and Tupelo Capital Management, and The Freedom Forum

Presented at LaGuardia Theater in association with Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and the Performing Arts

STUTTGART BALLET

ROMEO AND JULIET

July 7 at 7 P.M., July 11 at 2 P.M. and 8 P.M.

ONEGIN

July 8-10 at 8 P.M.

The Stuttgart has not been seen in New York for nineteen years, but this revitalized company returns as part of its tribute to founder John Cranko's seventieth birthday year. Under the artistic direction of Reid Anderson, the Stuttgart is described in Europe as "A company which charges across the stage with the power of a Porsche." Accompanied by the New York City Opera Orchestra, the fifty-seven member company performs two of Cranko's most famous story ballets, *Romeo and Juliet* (music by Prokofiev) and *Onegin* (music by Tchaikovsky). In a special appearance, former Stuttgart prima ballerina Marcia Haydée will dance the role of Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*.

New York State Theater
Tickets: $60, $50, $40, $20

Support provided by
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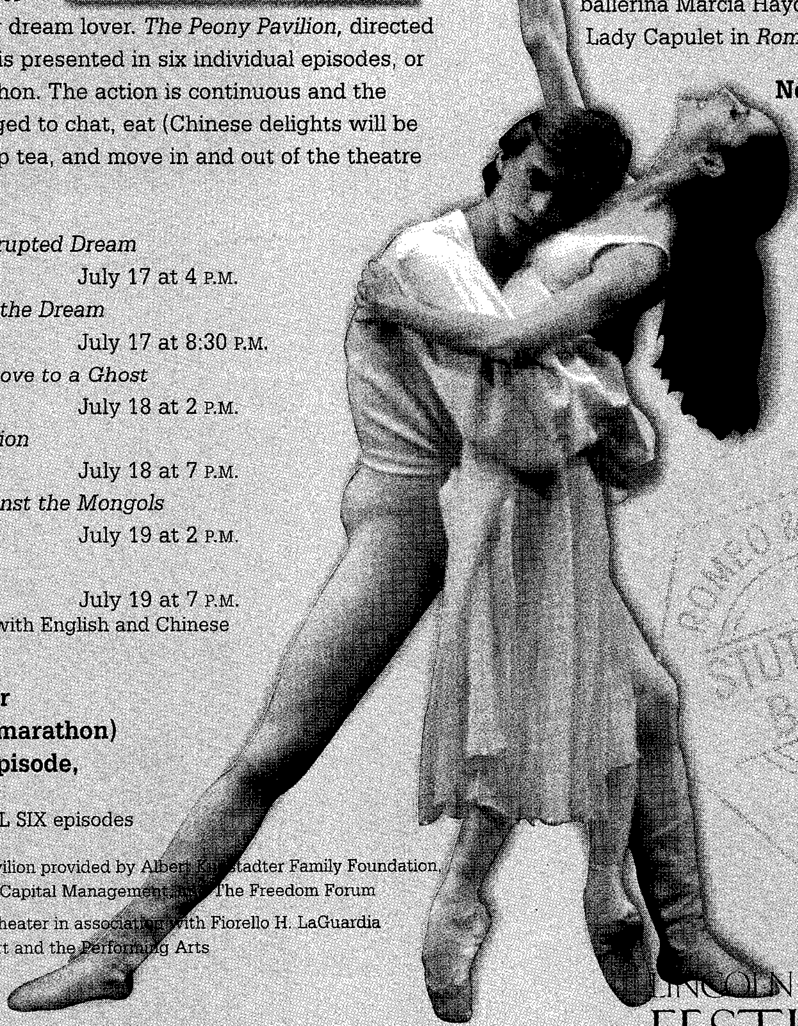

ROMEO & JULIET
STUTTGART BALLET
ONEGIN

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U.S. Premiere

La Fura dels Baus
F@UST: VERSION 3.0

F@UST Versio
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Performed in Spanish, Catalan, French, and English, with simultaneous translation into English

F@ust: Version 3.0 is the unleashing of desire, the passion of love and death. La Fura dels Baus, Barcelona's "bad boys" of theatre, deconstruct Goethe's universal tale and take a modern day Faust on a nightmarish ride through cyberspace, a Hell driven by obsession and raw sexual energy. Artistic Directors Carlos Padrissa and Alex Ollé bring stunning visual images, heart-stopping music, and their unique vision to this electrifying update.

NOTE: ADULT CONTENT AND LANGUAGE

New York State Theater
July 22–25 at 8 P.M., July 26 at 2 P.M.
Tickets: $50, $40, $30, $20

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JULY 7 - JULY 26
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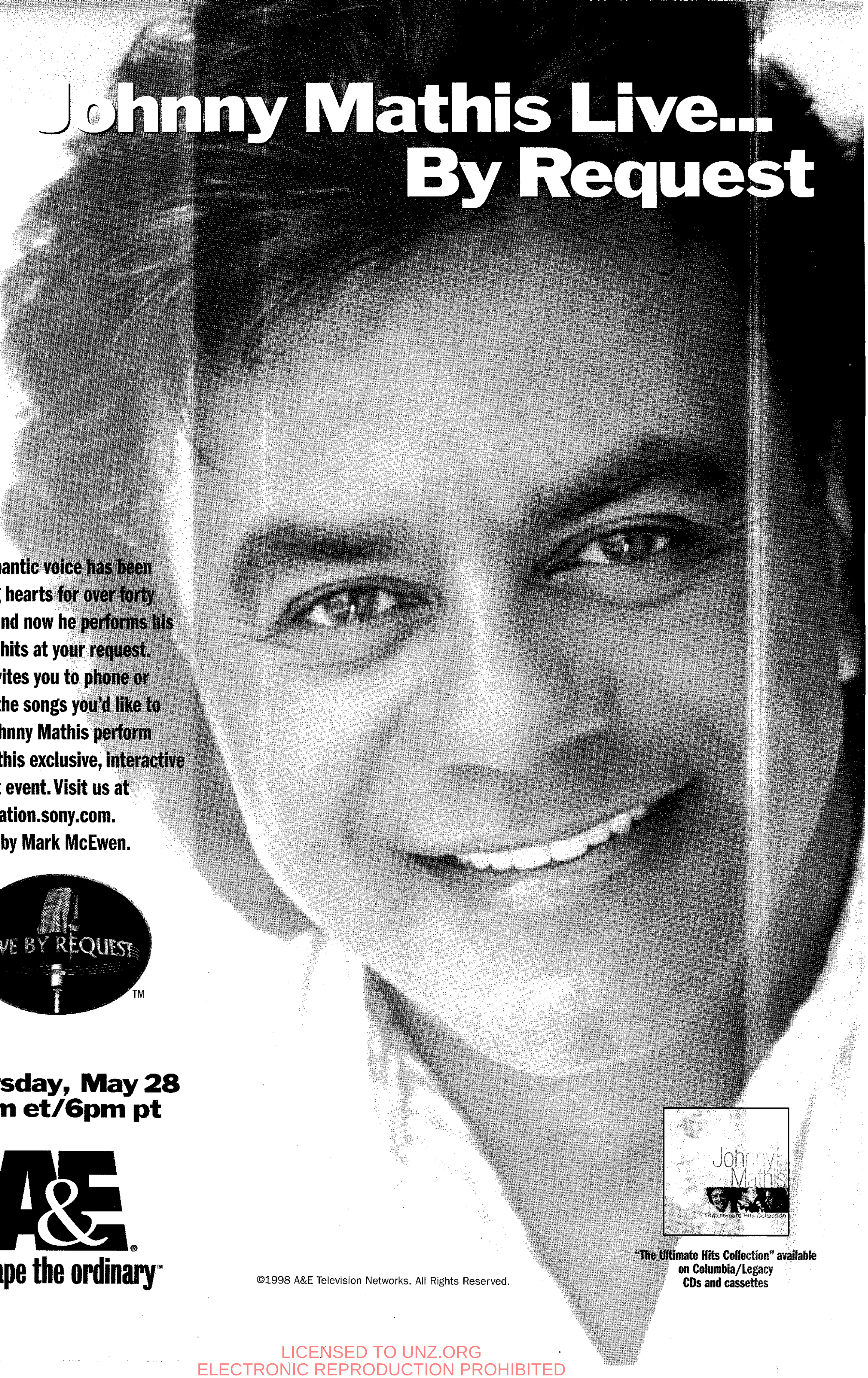

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THE COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS OF J.S. BACH

Christopher Herrick, Organist

Alice Tully Hall
July 13–26 at 5:30 P.M.
Tickets: $25

Major support provided by
The Alice Tully Foundation

Festival 98 presents Bach at his most prolific, most inspired, most spiritual. Acclaimed English concert organist Christopher Herrick, for ten years the organist at Westminster Abbey, performs a series of fourteen consecutive recitals on Alice Tully Hall's prized 4,192-pipe Kuhn organ. Programs offer a cornucopia of toccatas, fugues, preludes, fantasias, and more. Get off to an early start with Bach–then catch another evening performance at Festival 98.

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David Tudor's RAINFOREST

In collaboration with the
Lincoln Center Institute

"Listeners" are free to wander in and around this electro-acoustic environment, conceived by the late David Tudor as an evolving accompaniment for a Merce Cunningham dance.

Clark Studio Theater
July 15–17 from 4 P.M.–8 P.M.
July 18 and 19 from Noon–8 P.M.
Ongoing admission during posted hours
Tickets: $8

NY VIDEO FESTIVAL

Presented in association with the
Film Society of Lincoln Center

For the third year the Film Society of Lincoln Center will present its Video Festival in the Walter Reade Theater. Full of remarkable experiments and essays in the video medium, highlights of this year's program include the epic *Spiritual Voices* by cinematic visionary Alksandr Soluov and Chris Marker's foray into multimedia, *Immemory One*.

Walter Reade Theater
July 17–23

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U.S. Premiere

Theatre de Complicite
THE STREET OF CROCODILES

England's premier cutting-edge theatre company (whose production of *The Chairs* just won raves on Broadway) returns to the Lincoln Center Festival with its award-winning *The Street of Crocodiles,* praised by *The Sunday Times* of London as "visual and visionary theatre." Directed by Complicite's Artistic Director Simon McBurney, the story is based on the life of surrealist writer Bruno Schulz, who in 1942 was forced by the Nazis to sort books for banning.

John Jay College Theater
July 16–26 at 8 P.M. (except Sunday July 26 at 2 P.M.)
(no performance July 20)
Tickets: $50

Support for Theatre de Complicite provided by The Skirball Foundation and Solomon & Blanche De Jonge Foundation

TWELFTH NIGHT
or, What You Will
by William Shakespeare

Produced by Lincoln Center Theater
in association with Lincoln Center Festival 98

The Tony® Award-winning team of director Nicholas Hytner and designer Bob Crowley *(Carousel)* create a new production of *Twelfth Night,* one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies. This performance will offer a fascinating contrast to the Festival's presentation of *The Peony Pavilion* written by Shakespeare's Chinese contemporary, Tang Xianzu.

Vivian Beaumont Theater
July 7–26
Tuesday–Saturday at 8 P.M. Wednesday and Saturday at 2 P.M.
Sunday at 3 P.M. (except Tuesday July 7 at 7 P.M.)
Tickets: $60, $50
Tickets purchased after July 16: $65, $55

Major support provided by The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, The Eleanor Naylor Dana Charitable Trust, and Mr. and Mrs. Jerome L. Greene

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JULY 7 · JULY 26
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LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL

JULY 7 - JULY 26

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IN PERSON:

TICKETS FOR ALL FESTIVAL EVENTS are now available at the Festival 98 Box Office, located at **Avery Fisher Hall**, 65th Street and Broadway. Box Office hours are Monday–Saturday 10 A.M.–6 P.M. and from 12 P.M.–6 P.M. on Sunday.

> In addition, tickets for **Twelfth Night** are also available at the **Vivian Beaumont Theater** Box Office. Monday–Saturday 10 A.M.–8 P.M. and from 12 P.M.–6 P.M. on Sunday.

> Tickets for events taking place at **Alice Tully Hall** are also available at the Alice Tully Hall Box Office. Monday–Saturday 11 A.M.–6 P.M. and from 12 P.M.–6 P.M. on Sunday.

> Beginning June 15, tickets for **New York State Theater** events are also available at the New York State Theater Box Office. Monday 10 A.M.–7:15 P.M., Tuesday–Saturday 10 A.M.–8:15 P.M. and Sunday from 11:30 A.M.–7:15 P.M.

ON THE INTERNET: Visit www.lincolncenter.org.* Click on Lincoln Center Festival 98 and follow instructions.

BY PHONE:

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>**F@ust: Version 3.0, the Stuttgart Ballet,** and **The Hamburg Ballet** are also available through TICKETMASTER* at 212-307-4100.

>**Twelfth Night** tickets are also available through TELE-CHARGE* at 212-239-6200.

* *A per-ticket service charge will apply.*

Programs and artists are subject to change.

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At A Glance

Week One July 7–12 · Week Two July 13–19 · Week Three July 20–26

		T	W	Th	F	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat	Sun
		7	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**
THEATRE	**LINCOLN CENTER THEATER:** *Twelfth Night*	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■		■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
	GESHER THEATRE *Village*	■	■	■	■	■	■														
	GESHER THEATRE *Adam Resurrected*								■	■	■	■	■	■							
	THEATRE DE COMPLICITE																				
	The Street of Crocodiles										■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
	LA FURA DELS BAUS *F@ust: Version 3.0*																■	■	■	■	■
OPERA	**THE PEONY PAVILION**	Episodes 1–6	■	■	■	■	■					Marathon	■	■							
	SEQUENTIA Hildegard's *Ordo Virtutum*	■		■	■																
	PATIENCE & SARAH		■		■	■															
MUSIC	**BERNSTEIN: COMPOSER & CHAMPION:** Prg. A	■		■																	
	THE COMPLETE ORGAN WORKS OF J.S. BACH							■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	BERNSTEIN: COMPOSER & CHAMPION: Prg. B								■	■											
	David Tudor's RAINFOREST									■	■	■	■	■							
	SEVEN GATES OF JERUSALEM: An Oratorio											■	■								
	THE UNKNOWN BERNSTEIN Vocal & Piano Works														■						
	HILDEGURLS *The Electronic Ordo Virtutum*																■		■	■	
	LITERALLY: BERNSTEIN Eos Orchestra																	■			
DANCE	**STUTTGART BALLET** *Romeo and Juliet*	■				■															
	STUTTGART BALLET *Onegin*		■	■	■																
	THE HAMBURG BALLET *All Our Yesterdays*								■		■	■									
	THE HAMBURG BALLET *Bernstein Dances*									■			■								
VIDEO	**THE NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL**											■	■	■	■	■	■	■			

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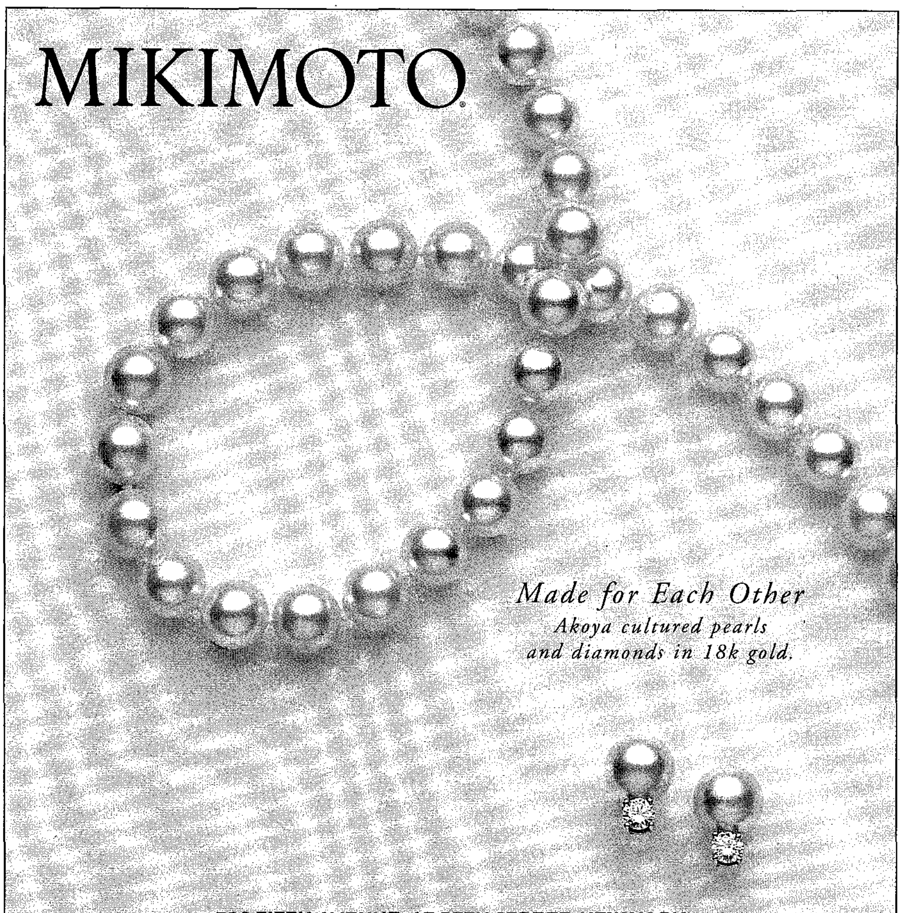

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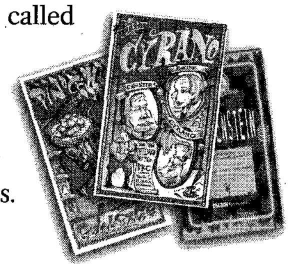

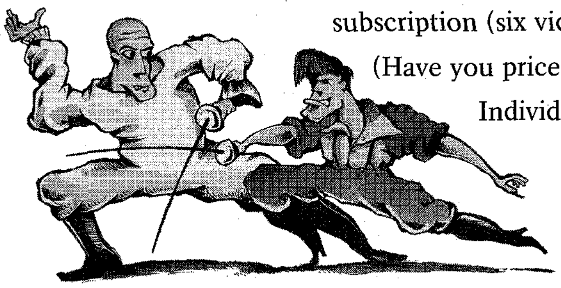

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Photos: Bernstein: Eugene Cook; Stuttgart Ballet: Gundel Kilian; The Hamburg Ballet: Holger Badekow; La Fura: Gol; *Patience & Sarah:* Christine A. Butler; *The Peony Pavilion:* Huang Haiwei; New York Video Festival: Paul Bush; *The Street of Crocodiles:* Tristram Kenton

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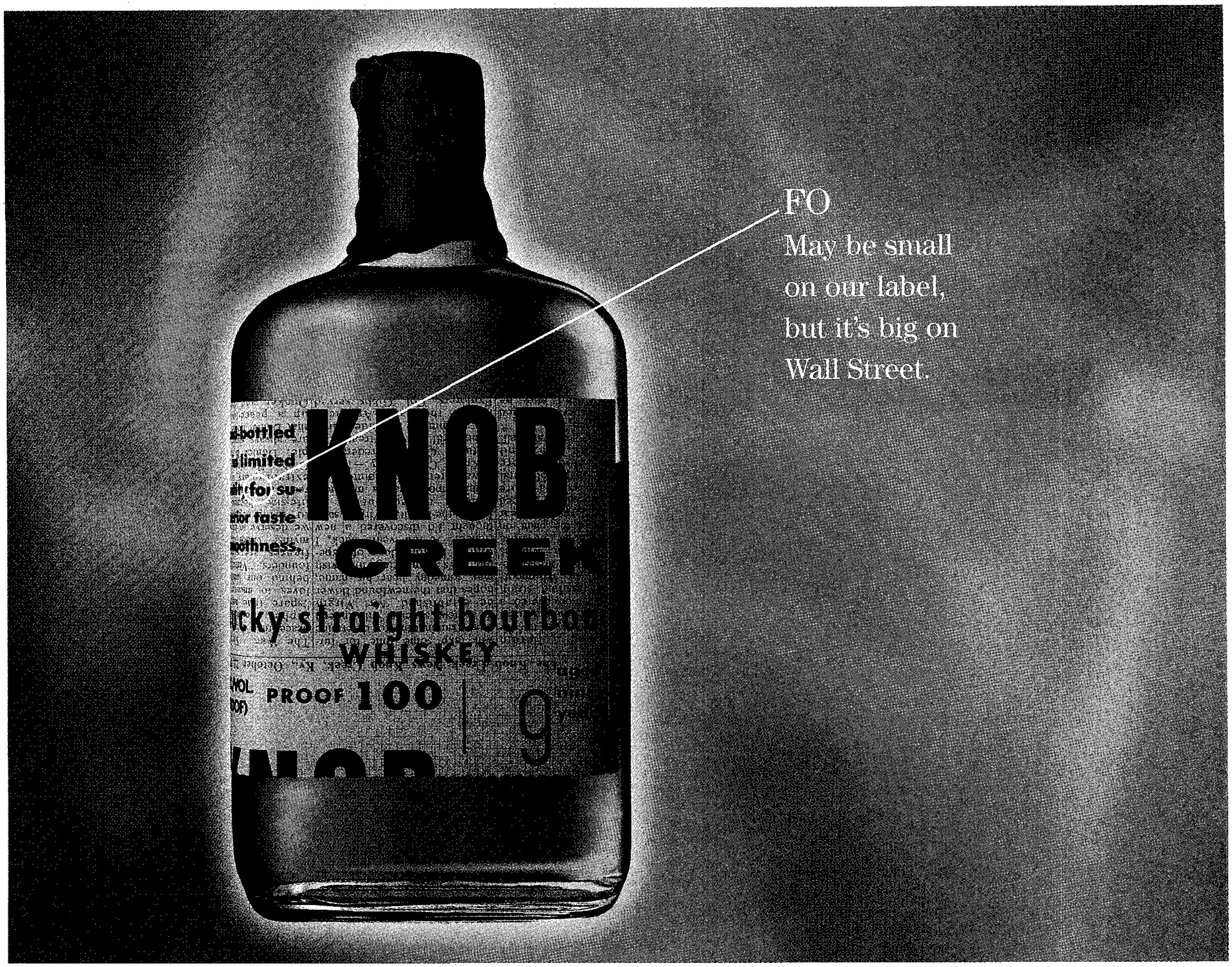
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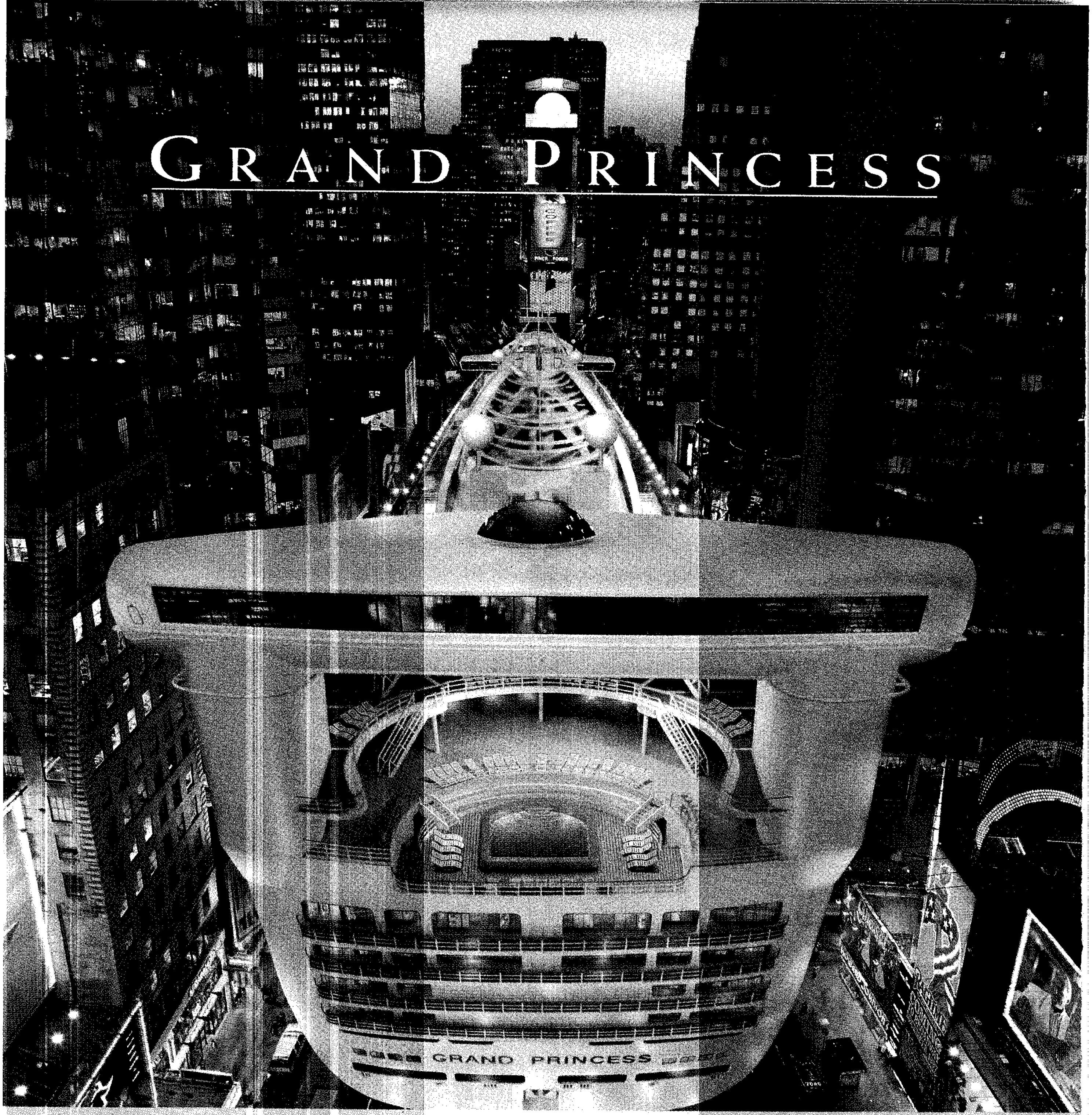

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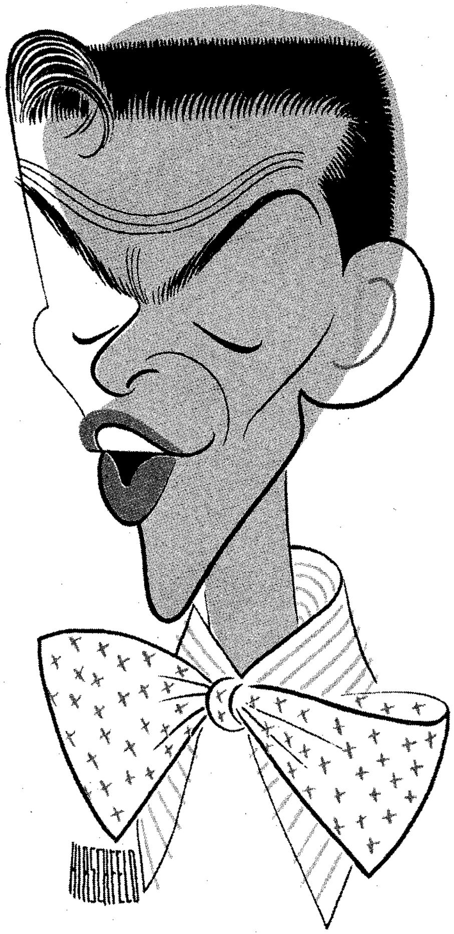
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

EIGHTY-TWO VERY GOOD YEARS

IT'S an article of faith among Sinatra fans that his middle period—the Capitol years, which were preceded by the Columbia years and followed by the Reprise years—was his greatest. Around the time Sinatra began recording for Capitol, in 1953, new technology made possible the long-playing album, which, in turn, made theme albums possible. Sinatra was a pioneer of the form, and though his theme albums tend to fall into only two major mood groups—chest-bursting, brassy exhilaration and stabbing, soul-collapsing despair—each of his musical treks up Everest and each of his descents to the bottom of the sea has its own special thrills. The album covers tell the story of the expeditions in images that are now not merely famous but iconic, and widely imitated (and easily parodied): Sinatra winking and summoning the listener to dance, fly, swing with him; Sinatra standing by a lamppost, sitting at a bar, walking alone at dusk, a cigarette or a drink his only companion. Even the bleakly sad albums advertise a kind of confidence in their ability to get you to their stated destination: Passengers now departing for the spiritual abyss—all aboard!



AL HIRSCHFELD, COURTESY THE MARGO FEIDEN GALLERIES LTD., NEW YORK

Sinatra, of course, made beautiful records before he signed with Capitol and after he formed his own company, Reprise, in the early sixties. But virtually all the Capitol albums are considered classics, with highest ranking usually going to the albums he made with the arranger and conductor Nelson Riddle—from the swinging (you may find yourself involuntarily doing the Sinatra head cock when you listen to "Songs for Swingin' Lovers" or "A Swingin' Affair!") to the swaying ("Nice 'n' Easy") and on to the quietly sweet ("Close to You"). At the non-swinging, exclamation-pointless end of the spectrum is the pitch-black "Only the Lonely," in which Sinatra ties himself to the tracks. He loosens his bonds a bit on "In the Wee Small Hours"—just enough to allow the possibility of hope. This is Sinatra at his most vulnerable, his most mortal, his most human—it's the melancholy Sinatra, whose mood is indigo rather than black. This, unlike the Sinatra whose arms are flung wide and whose head is thrown back, or the one who's lost at the bottom of the glass, is the Sinatra you can touch—it's the Sinatra who asks to be touched. And it's the Sinatra who touches us. This person with wounds, aches, and longings is most fully present in two Capitol albums arranged and conducted by Gordon Jenkins: "Where Are You?" and "No One Cares." They are heavy with strings, and they hurt your heart. In many of the songs, the singer is looking for someone: "Maybe You'll be There," "Where Is the One," "I Cover the Waterfront," "There's No You." These are the songs—the ones in which Sinatra, in a quavery voice, seems to be asking for our help in his search—which remind us that the Chairman of the Board was, like everyone else, just an entry-level human being. This is the singer we loved. We knew that the relationship would end someday—it was Sinatra's singing, after all, that told us so much of what we know about endings. He knew what he was talking about: that rainy day is here. —NANCY FRANKLIN

•

FRANK used to come in June and stay with us in the house that my husband, Bennett—the publisher Bennett Cerf—and I had in Mount Kisco. He had his own room with his own closet, and we called him "our summer boarder." We all just had a good time. We sat around the pool, did a lot of crossword puzzles—Frank was very good at crossword puzzles—and the radio was always on. He was a brilliant raconteur—he told the most wonderful stories about his escapades and usually tried to make himself the goat. He was a simple man. A couple of times, our cook walked out, and Frank got into the kitchen. He was an excellent cook.

Frank used to complain about two paintings in my living room in New York. They faced each other on opposite walls, and he didn't like it that one picture was so much bigger than the other one. I didn't care—I liked them both. One weekend when Bennett and I were in Mount Kisco, Frank got the maid to let him into our New York house. When we came back to the city, we discovered that he'd painted a picture the same size as the larger painting and hung it where the smaller one had been. It was an abstract painting—he called it "New York, New York." Frank was a very good painter. The painting is still right where he put it.

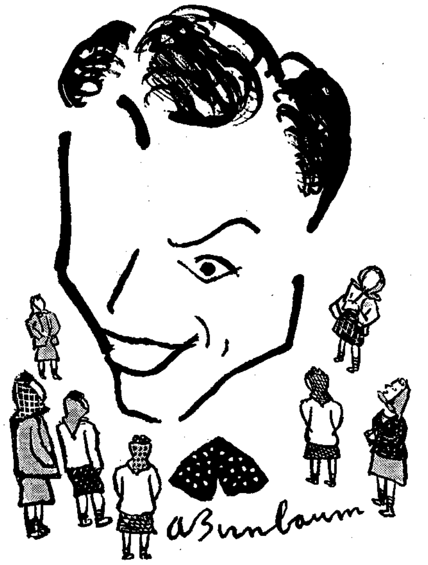
—PHYLLIS CERF WAGNER

•

FRANK SINATRA was, for all his fame, an oddity in popular culture. With no other pop legend is the distance between what the work says and what the life implied quite so large. If Sinatra had been what his legend diminished him to, then he would be only what George Steinbrenner wishes he sounded like in the shower—the eternal voice of the steak house, the sound of the big shot. Yet the weird and continually encouraging thing about Sinatra is that, while his legend touched on one set of values (virility, flash, a hint of gangsterism), his work was always characterized by the opposite: gravity, understatement, and a precise calibration of emotion. No other pop-culture figure had dramatized in a body of work what it is like to actually live a life—to start out as a kid, become a grownup, and end up as an old man. And this makes his life, which seemed marked by a kind of permanent adolescence, even harder to understand.

It was only after he lost his youth that he became an artist, and a very great one. We are so accustomed to hearing this episode of the legend—how the bobby-soxers fell away, how Columbia gave up on him in the early fifties, how he pulled himself back up with a big movie—that we forget the strangeness and originality of its finest outcome, which we hear in his melancholy songs of the mid- to late fifties.

Americans like to think of themselves as eternally youthful and of their music as an expression of that youthfulness. Yet the two most beloved practitioners of American pop, Elvis and Sinatra, were men whose most moving work was about the loss of youth. In Elvis, it was a tragic loss. But in Sinatra's singing—working its way along from crooning to vocal cello-playing to that amazing staccato effort of an old man's will with which he mesmerized audiences at the end of his life—the loss of youth was resolved in maturity, a graceful growing old. He made forty sound sexier than twenty, sixty sound more swinging than thirty, ninety—well, he never got quite that far. But he got far enough.



—ADAM GOPNIK

•

I ONCE got a glimpse of the famous Sinatra temper. In the mid-sixties, I walked into the Bistro, in Beverly Hills, where the agent Swifty Lazar was throwing a book party for two of his clients, Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins, the authors of "Is Paris Burning?" The first people I ran into were Frank, Mia Farrow, and her mother, Maureen O'Sullivan. When I saw that Frank and Maureen were having a heated argument—while Mia looked on helplessly—I kept moving. Upstairs, the room was full of A-list Hollywood—among others, Lauren Bacall and Jason Robards, Jr., the Billy Wilders, and Lennie Dunne, the wife of Dominick Dunne.

During dinner, Frank started to give Lennie a hard time, for reasons that I can't remember. First, Betty Bacall made an attempt to calm him down. Then Swifty tried talking to him, and Frank cracked. Jumping up, he flipped the table of food and drink onto the diminutive and extremely fastidious agent, who found himself covered in Bistro ratatouille. Frank grabbed Mia. "Come on," he said. "Let's get the hell out of this dump." On the way out, he stopped beside my table, put a hand on my back, and said, "Kid, don't waste your time with these bums. You got stardust on your shoulders."

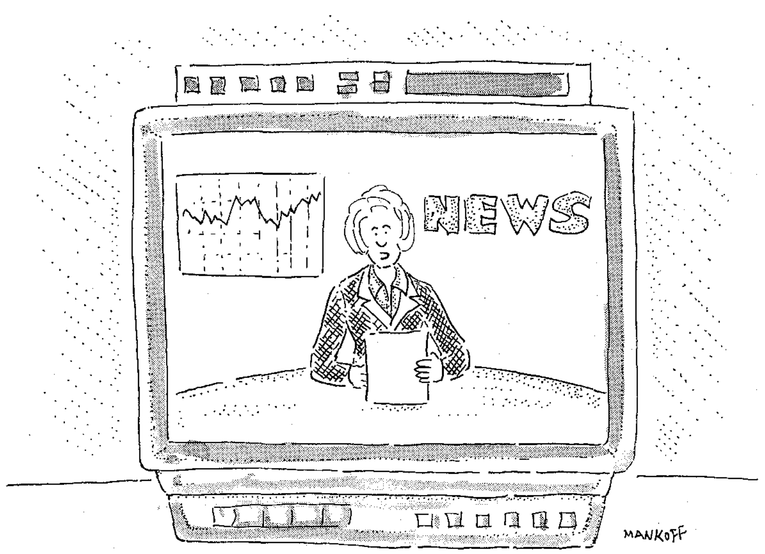
—PETER DUCHIN

•

ONE hot day in the summer of 1966, I found myself sitting beside Frank Sinatra at a table in Patsy's. I was twenty-two and working at Random House in the publicity department. When my boss introduced me to the singer in our offices that morning, Sinatra seemed quite aware of how overwhelmed I was. He asked me to join them for lunch. I said no, thank you; he said yes, you must; my boss seemed uncertain. I went.

People applauded as we walked into the restaurant. Sinatra was utterly charming, and, since I was too overcome to speak, I just proceeded to drink a few gin-and-tonics and listen to the conversation. After cocktails, afraid that I might make a total fool of myself, I got ready to leave. But, before I did, I worked up the courage to tell Sinatra about a philosophy paper I had written in school, in which I wondered whom the people we refer to when we want to make a point refer to when *they* want to make a point. For instance, what did God say when he wanted to say "for God's sake"? Whom did Cary Grant refer to when he wanted to say someone was as charming as Cary Grant? How did Nelson Rockefeller manage to say that someone was as rich as Rockefeller? So I

ABE BIRNBAUM, THE NEW YORKER 11/2/46



"And, in a move sure to attract the attention of regulators, the private sector made a bid to acquire the public sector."

asked Frank Sinatra whose music he referred to, whose records he put on, when he wanted to create a romantic atmosphere. Without a moment's pause, he replied, "Tony Benedetto's." I floated back to work, people staring at me the whole time, as I belted out every Sinatra and Tony Bennett song I knew, all the way to Madison Avenue.

—RIKKI STAPLETON

•

SINATRA was a musician, not a life style. We should remember his intelligence as a singer—the way he husbanded his good but not necessarily great voice into something joyful and profound. We should remember his courage—the way he saved his voice at mid-career by making a virtue of the cracks that had appeared in his youthful technique. We should remember his love of language—the way he dramatized words, brought dry polysyllables to life. (No other singer could make so much of the word "unphotographable.") We should remember his love of complex, quasi-classical arrangements, his instinct for matching his voice to the instruments, his startling graciousness toward his regular players.

Sometimes, the voice and the man were one and the same. Sinatra's "swingin'" songs act out in musical terms his Rat Pack persona. But the flip sides of those numbers—desolate torch songs like "It Was a Very Good Year" and "When No One Cares"—seem to come from nowhere. The source of that low, lonely thrum hasn't been identified by Sinatra's multiplying biographers; it may not have to be, because it was a musical effect, an expression of the baritone art. The voice was veering in the opposite direction of the legend: Sinatra was a thin young man who grew wealthy and stout, but it's his younger voice that sounds plump and his older voice that sounds lean and hungry. He knew all along—or, at least, until his erratic last years—that his voice was what counted in the end. Now it's the only real thing we have left: the bright, sad man on the record player.

—ALEX ROSS

•

A COUPLE of summers ago, Carnegie Hall inaugurated a series of concerts devoted to American popular songs with an evening celebrating—who else?—Frank Sinatra. I wrote an appreciation of the event which combined admiring music criticism and interviews with various people whose careers owed a good deal to Sinatra's influence. (One of them, the songwriter Jimmy Webb, recalled being with the singer one night at the Waldorf Towers, the two of them leaning out the window in the direction of New Jersey, and hearing Sinatra mutter, "It's a lot farther from Hoboken to the Waldorf Towers than you think.")

One day, a few weeks after the article appeared, I was in my study at home when the phone rang. A woman's voice said, without any preamble, "Mr. Sinatra would like to say thank you."

I remember thinking that this was some sort of joke, but a moment later a man's voice—The Voice—came on the line: "How did you know so much about me, kid?"

Gulp. "Well . . . um . . . you've been around a long time. After all, I grew up with you."

"That piece was damn nice of you."

"Thank you."

"That line about the 'parachuted endings' of my phrases. That was good, kid."

"Thank you."

"See you around, kid."

Click.

Thank you.

—CHARLES MICHENER

•

IN 1960, when the lyricists Alan and Marilyn Bergman were just starting out, they wrote their first big hit for Frank Sinatra, to music by Lew Spence. "Nice 'n' Easy" became the title song on an album, and "from that moment on he always, always called us 'the kids,'" the Bergmans said together over the telephone from Beverly Hills. The kids told me that when Sinatra had his television show, on ABC, he used to sign off with the line "Sleep warm." One day, he asked the Bergmans to write the lyrics for a song, also with music by Lew Spence, to be called "Sleep Warm." "So we did," they said. "He was so remarkable—you could write words to fit his mouth. Great singers have it in three places—in the head, in the heart, and in the pipes. Frank Sinatra was a piece of theatre, a great interpreter of the lyric, so one could make a custom suit for him." Then the Bergmans sang the closing chorus of their song over the telephone:

Sleep warm, sleep well,
Let dreams weave you a spell.
Sweet dreams of me, my love;
Close your eyes now and kiss me
And whisper you'll miss me,
Sleep tight, sleep well, sleep warm.

—LILLIAN ROSS

DEPT. OF SCOOPS

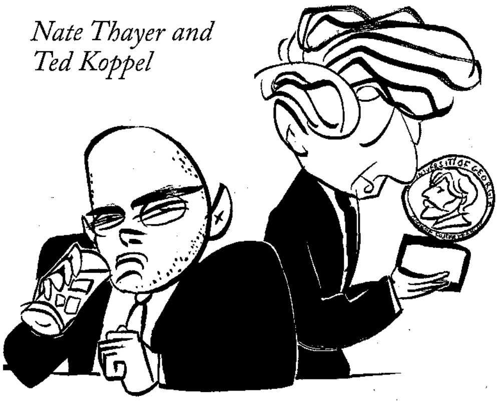
Where's the Committee to Protect Journalists from each other?

A George Foster Peabody Award is the broadcasting world's version of the Pulitzer, and until last Monday, when the fifty-seventh annual awards ceremony was held, at the Waldorf-Astoria, nobody who was honored with a Peabody had ever spurned the distinction. Then Nate Thayer came to town. Thayer is the thirty-eight-year-old Bangkok-based journalist-adventurer who, last July, obtained one of the great scoops of our time by trekking into the Cambodian jungle, attending the Khmer Rouge show trial of Pol Pot, and trekking out into Thailand with the whole bizarre spectacle on high-quality videotape. Much of that footage was promptly aired by ABC's "Nightline," in a three-part series, which went on to win one of this year's Peabodys for "distinguished achievement and meritorious public service." And Thayer went from being the first journalist to meet up with Pol Pot in nearly twenty years to being the first to turn down a Peabody.

In a letter "formally and unequivocally" rejecting his share in the award, Thayer wrote, "Ted Koppel and 'Nightline' literally stole my work, took credit for it, trivialized it, refused to pay me, and then attempted to bully and extort me when I complained. They should not be rewarded for this kind of behavior and I under no circumstances want my name associated with these egregious violations of basic journalistic ethics and integrity." So last week's gala awards luncheon became a split-level ceremony: upstairs, in the Waldorf's Grand Ballroom, Koppel accepted the trophy—the sixth Peabody of his career—while downstairs, in one of the Waldorf's many saloons, Thayer pleaded his case to the barman, who set up his double Scotches for free, explaining, "I like a man with principles."

Thayer has no quarrel with the series Koppel anchored, or with the fee of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars that, a month ago, "Nightline" finally paid him for the use of his footage. But the deal—which he originally negotiated with Koppel over the phone—was for a one-week exclusive on North American television rights only. As Thayer understood it, that meant that he could sell the remaining world broadcast rights and the potentially lucrative still photographs from his encounter with Pol Pot, and that he retained the print-media exclusive to the story, which he had promised to his longtime employer, the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, a Hong Kong-based weekly. Thayer says that he chose to work with Koppel "because of his reputation for integrity," and yet "within twenty-four hours the pictures and the story were all over the place. ABC's public-relations people just took it over."

Even before the first "Nightline" program on Pol Pot aired, the network's promotion teams were shipping out photographs made from Thayer's footage, and video clips were available on the ABC Web site, where anybody could simply download them. "Nightline" also allowed a writer from the *Times* to preview ten minutes of the footage, with the result that Thayer's scoop—text and photographs—appeared on the paper's front page before his own article for the *Review* had gone to press. According to a spokeswoman for ABC, this sort of pre-broadcast publicity is normal, and the network did nothing to violate its agreement. If Thayer thinks otherwise, the spokeswoman says, "it might be that he had no idea that this is what happens when you deal with a large news organization."



Nate Thayer and Ted Koppel

TOM BACHTELL

Thayer does think otherwise. "My main objection is that the industry has taken control of journalists, and part of our job is to fight for the integrity of our profession," he said last week over more double Scotches in a midtown bar. "I've just become incredibly disillusioned in the last year." Sadly, Thayer's sense of himself as something of a dinosaur is not inaccurate; in the dangerous pursuit of the stories that have made him famous, he has often needed to trust verbal agreements—even with Khmer Rouge cadres—as a matter of life or death. And nobody in the news business seems to recognize that fact better than Ted Koppel. Last October, at the same Waldorf podium where he would claim his latest Peabody award, Koppel addressed a banquet for the Committee to Protect Journalists, paying homage to reporters who risk "death, or torture, or imprisonment" in violent places under repressive regimes, and he warned that American journalism was equally endangered—but "more insidiously"—by "the trivialization of our industry." He said, "We struggle to be first with the obvious. . . . We're afraid of the competition; afraid of earning less money; afraid of losing our audience."

Last week, with the ghost of those words hanging in the hall, Koppel kept his Peabody acceptance speech brief. "Nate has chosen not to accept this award, because he has some profound differences with ABC News, with 'Nightline,' with me. I'm sorry about that, genuinely sorry," he said, adding, "While he rejects the award, I don't want to reject the enormous contribution that he made to bringing the world this story."

It was odd to hear Thayer spoken of as having made a "contribution" to the story that he alone had brought out of Cambodia's jungles. Finding Pol Pot was his biggest scoop, but for ten years, in one groundbreaking story after another, Thayer has not only chronicled Cambodia's treacherous political history but also done a good deal to shape it. Early last month, for instance, he got word that the Khmer Rouge leaders who had purged Pol Pot, and were keeping him captive, wanted to turn the aging and sickly boss of the killing fields over to "the Americans" for trial before an international tribunal. "But they didn't know any Americans," Thayer recalled. "Just me. I went back in, and spoke with them, and reported their wishes. The Voice of America's Khmer-language service led the eight-o'clock news with the story on April 15th. Pol Pot was listening, and a few hours later he was dead." Thayer grinned, and ran a big hand over his shiny shaved scalp; his narrow eyes seemed to brighten. "That's my award," he said, and laughed. "I killed Pol Pot."

—Philip Gourevitch

ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

THE DON

Why are so many politicians and journalists lining up to be insulted by Don Imus?

BY KEN AULETTA

THE Don is not pleased when visitors blather. He holds grudges, he is personally insulted when companies don't reward his favorite charity, and if you don't amuse him you're whacked. Each morning, he is quick to let loose on "wimps," "jerks," "weasels," and "punks."

The Don would like to think it's fear that makes guests "suck up" to him.

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

From behind his radio microphone, Don Imus looks less like a Don than like an aging cowboy: his eyes concealed by dark glasses, his jaws hammering away at an endless supply of Nicorette gum, his head an unmade bed of wavy sandy hair, his attire often consisting of a black leather jacket, an open-necked shirt, jeans, boots, and a silk bandanna. A "wrinkled old doofus" is how the producer Bernard McGuirk, who plays the role of bad brother on the show, often refers to his boss. But the fifty-seven-year-old Imus talks like a Don. During his April 24th broadcast, for example, he stated his displeasure at those "worms" at Simon & Schuster, which happens to be the publisher of his last book—and his next. "It's not like I ever forget," he warned.

The publishing industry takes this seriously—not the insults, but Imus's power. The onetime disk jockey is a voracious reader, and he loves to plug books. The Simon & Schuster publisher Jack Romanos (whom Imus, inevitably, calls a "beady-eyed little weasel") credits Imus with boosting the company's print order for Howard Kurtz's "Spin Cycle" from twenty-five thousand copies to two hundred thousand. Imus's on-air enthusiasm for books like Pete Hamill's "A Drinking Life" and Jane Mendelsohn's "I Was Amelia Earhart" transformed them into best-sellers. "All you need do," the novelist Anna Quindlen says, "is hear him wax poetic about your book and you say, 'Hell, I'd buy that book.' "

The Mendelsohn book "almost happened in a vacuum," says Paul Bogaards, the vice-president and director of promotion at Knopf, the book's publisher. "There was nothing else going on. It was his endorsement that propelled it onto the best-seller list. In the span of one month—April to May, 1996—we went from thirty thousand copies in print to two hundred and twenty-five thousand. For a lot of people in the industry, that was a clear compass point."

Imus's best friend and longtime sidekick, the newsreader Charles McCord, once boasted that his boss "is now a fashioner of kings." Imus shot back, "You don't have to suck up to me. Everyone else does."

My own curiosity about Imus was aroused not only by his influence in publishing and elsewhere but also by this matter of courting favor from the Don—this sucking up. Why, I wondered, did so many of my journalistic colleagues flatter him so? Why did ABC's Cokie Roberts, who once swore she'd never again be a guest, return?

It was interesting to me that otherwise solemn journalists and politicians have an itch to visit the Imus locker room—people like the columnist Frank Rich, of the *Times*, who gossiped on air about the Monica Lewinsky case in ways that he never has in print. In fact, a daily parade of public figures tell Imus things that they wouldn't dare say in their usual workplace. Chip Reid, an NBC Washington correspondent, put aside his usual objectivity to talk to Imus about the Whitewater figure Susan McDougal, saying, "Why do they make that poor woman walk around in shackles?" And the conservative analyst Laura Ingraham was trying so hard to humor Imus that, on April 22nd, she blurted, "Monica Lewinsky should get her exceedingly large rear end indicted." (Imus calls Lewinsky "the fat slut," and when there are no developments in the case he says it's a slow news day.) I was also interested in why Imus has been so successful in getting so many journalists to make donations of five thousand dollars to his favorite personal charity, the Imus Ranch.

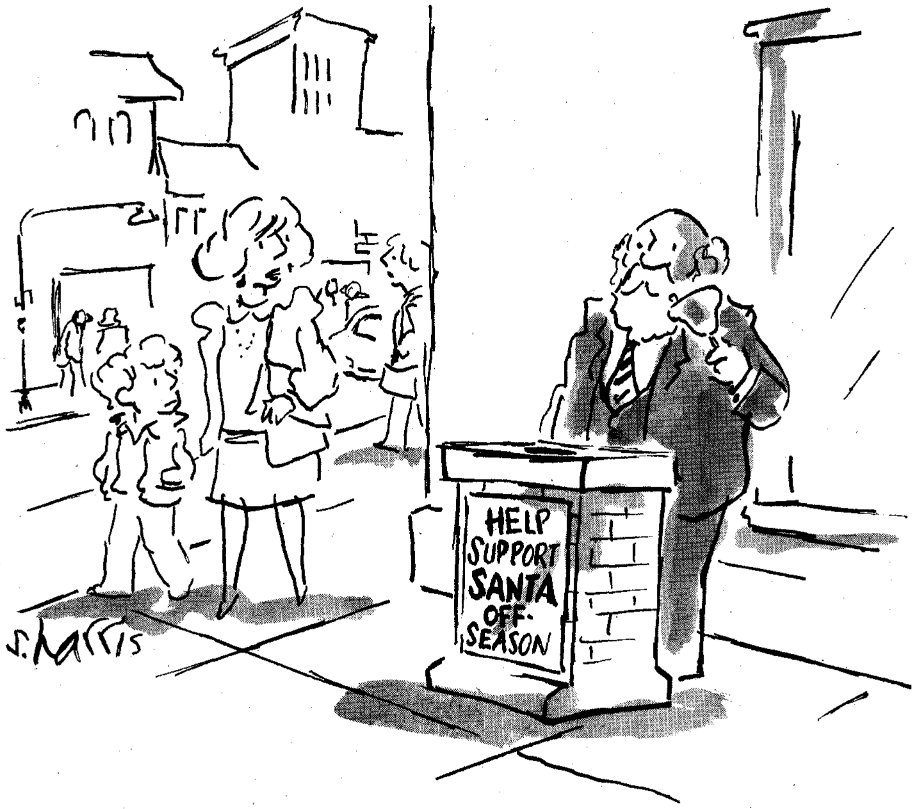
IMUS, who loves to joke about Washington sex scandals, is completely serious about his charitable work. Over the past decade, Imus-hosted radiothons have raised nearly fourteen million dollars for two causes: the C.J. Foundation for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (Joel Hollander, Imus's longtime general manager, lost a daughter to SIDS) and the Tomorrow's Children's Fund, which helps children with cancer and serious blood diseases. More recently, he has focussed much of his time on the Imus Ranch, an eight-hundred-and-ten-acre cattle ranch that he launched with a gift of a million dollars, a considerable chunk of what is believed to be a seven-million-dollar salary. The Ranch, which is fifty miles northeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and plans to open next spring, will be a camp for children with cancer or with serious blood disorders, and for children who have lost a sibling to SIDS.

When Imus announced in early April that he hoped eight hundred and ten individuals would come forward and buy one Ranch acre for five thousand dollars, the parcels were gone in four hours. Imus began to thank various media figures for their generosity, calling them fellow-Ranchhands. Soon enough, competition to become a Ranchhand got intense. On the April 24th show, Imus interviewed George Stephanopoulos. Stephanopoulos, who left the Clinton Administration after the 1996 election and is now an ABC commentator, has a book contract worth nearly three million dollars to write about his White House years. At the end of their conversation, as Imus was thanking him, Stephanopoulos interrupted, saying, "Before I go: I'm not too proud to suck up for a good cause. So count me in for five thousand on the Ranch!"

When I asked later why he had done it, Stephanopoulos told me, "I thought it was a good thing to do." Did he also think about getting invited back next fall to hawk his book? "I suppose," he conceded.

It's unfair, no doubt, to suggest that those who go on the air with Imus, or donate to the Ranch, are doing so solely out of self-interest, or that they are seeking what one regular calls "an insurance policy" against being called a jerk. For Imus, the charity is heartfelt; and journalists who spend airtime with Imus have many motives for doing so. Jeff Greenfield, the senior analyst on CNN and an Imus regular, says, "For a lot of people, going on Imus is a way for them to be a different person. No one knew Joe Lieberman"—the senator from Connecticut—"was funny." Greenfield says he often gets more comments for his Imus appearances than he does for his own television work. "I think people are onto the political-journalistic dance," he explains. "They know when they watch a press conference or an interview show they are getting predigested stuff—people are saying the same things they always say. With Imus, people feel he's going to ask them blunt things and not take bullshit for an answer."

In that way, people who talk to Imus are selling themselves as personalities, far removed from, say, the confines of a scripted newscast. The television anchors Tom Brokaw and Dan Rather are regulars; another is Mike Wallace, of "60 Minutes," who says, "You get to feel like you're a member of his club." When, in 1992, Imus interviewed then-Presidential candidate Bill Clinton, the Arkansas governor suggested that Imus call him Bubba, because "it's just Southern for mensch."



Of course, an Imus appearance is not risk-free. Senator Alfonse D'Amato was once introduced by Imus as someone who has "friends with bodies in the trunks of their cars." D'Amato, to demonstrate his hipness, mocked "little Judge Ito"—the judge in the O. J. Simpson trial—by quoting him in a Japanese accent, and evoked howls of protest.

President Clinton also discovered that appearing with Imus can be perilous. At the 1996 Radio and Television Correspondents' annual dinner, in Washington, Clinton stood before the audience and gave a flattering introduction to Imus: "All politicians pander to Don Imus, because real people listen to him," and he went on to testify that without Imus's support in the 1992 New York primary he might not have been elected. Imus then made what he later acknowledged to be "a hideous speech"—one filled with sexual innuendo about Clinton and a number of journalists—and delivered it in the presence of Clinton and his wife. After that event, Cokie Roberts called Imus "profoundly rude," and vowed that she would not "ever go back" on the show. Imus retaliated by banning her for life.

DURING the weeks in which I'd been immersed in the Imus program, my plan was to maintain a low profile, but Imus found out, and announced on the air that I was working on a piece about him. Worse, Imus was talking about *me;* he was telling listeners that I had been on his show once (twice, actually) and proved to be "a hideous guest," so "soft-spoken" that I induced sleep.

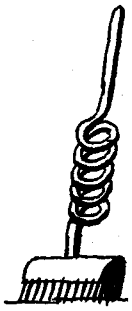
Imus's office is in the basement of WFAN's space, at the Kaufman Astoria Studios, in Queens, and from there, five mornings a week, from five-thirty to ten, "Imus in the Morning" takes care of his "guys"—promoting their books, their columns, and their lives to more than ten million listeners on more than a hundred stations and on MSNBC-TV. The office is within a labyrinth of corridors—past an immense tan cowboy hat hanging on a coat hook, past a limited-edition Elvis jukebox alive with lights, past a couch and a chair draped with Indian blankets. In a corner of this dimly lighted warren, Imus is surrounded by shelves sagging with books and by tables piled with bound galleys of about-to-be-published works. A muddy-blue industrial carpet covers the floor; the walls, which are panelled, are of a dark wood that is more gray than brown, like the small desk that Imus dwarfs. The program generates nearly half of the fifty million dollars a year in revenue which WFAN contributes to its corporate parent, CBS Radio.

Imus, who is more subdued off the air, met me in his office. Although he is quick to dismiss people as suckups, he exempts his Ranchhands. "I'd be surprised if they did it for cynical reasons," he said when I brought up the five-thousand-dollar gifts and asked about possible motives. "Maybe I'm naïve. I don't think so." Of his alleged power, Imus says, "It's bullshit."

He told me he had no list of media Ranchhands, so I produced one that I'd been compiling, and Imus confirmed that it was accurate. The list: "Face the Nation" anchor Bob Schieffer; "60 Minutes" correspondent Lesley Stahl; ABC News anchor Barbara Walters; CNN's Larry King; CNN anchor Judy Woodruff; CNN News chairman Tom Johnson; NBC News correspondent Andrea Mitchell; NBC president Robert Wright; Boston *Globe* columnist Mike Barnicle; author Anna Quindlen; author Mary Higgins Clark; author Carol Higgins Clark; Imus's literary agent, Esther (Lobster) Newberg; Simon & Schuster; WFAN sportscaster Mike Francesa; *Daily News* sports columnist Mike Lupica; "Access Hollywood" anchor Pat O'Brien; Republican Mary Matalin and Democrat James Carville; Laura Ingraham (she gave a thousand dollars and had a heifer named in her honor); Brokaw (in lieu of a cash contribution, he donated a horse from his Montana ranch); Greenfield; Rather; and Stephanopoulos.

I asked if it was bull for Imus to say, as he has said, that people come on his show because they fear him. "Yes," he replied. Then he smiled slightly and added, "But some people don't like to be made fun of." He added a moment later, "It has some value to them. That's why they come on."

The next morning, on the air, I had become part of my own story. Imus talked about our interview. He called me "charming," but then he proceeded to call me "hideously misguided" and "cynical." He joked about recruiting Bo Dietl, a former detective and show regular, to bend my knees. Then he told Andrea Mitchell, "He doesn't understand that the only reason people appear on my program is because they just don't want me to make fun of them. It has nothing to do with power. It's fear!"



It wasn't fear that lured Cokie Roberts back. Six months ago, Imus told me, he decided to lift the ban on Roberts and invite her to return. "She's a great guest," he explained. "She said fine. She said she'd come in when she's in New York." At the beginning of his April 29th show, Imus announced that the next day "Cokie Roberts returns to the show."

"Unbelievable!" snickered his sidekick McCord, who was sitting directly across from the I-Man, as he calls him. "She's 'banned for life'! Did she call?"

"Of course she called," Imus said. He went on to explain, "We always liked Cokie Roberts. She was a good guest.... She said the reason she was calling was that George Stephanopoulos was very approving."

"You're gullible," the producer McGuirk declared.

Roberts, who has a new book to sell, appeared on April 30th. For an exceedingly cordial seventeen minutes and twenty seconds, she and Imus talked about, among other things, her book, "We Are Our Mothers' Daughters."

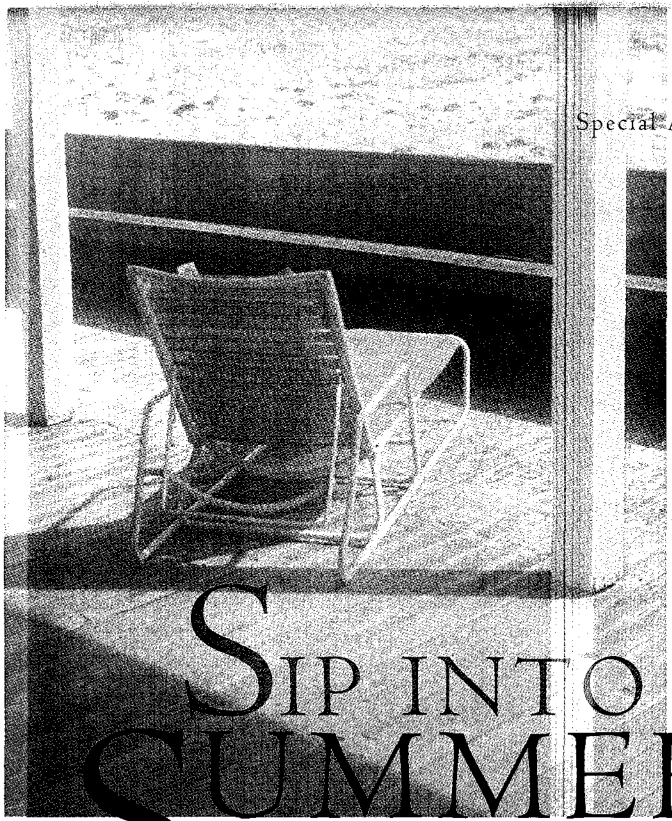
Not long after Roberts appeared, I told Imus that Simon & Schuster's Jack Romanos had praised him as "the second most powerful person in the country in terms of selling books." Imus professed outrage at this lack of respect, and during his May 6th show he declared, "Oprah Winfrey couldn't have put 'Spin Cycle' "—about the relationship between Clinton and the press—"on the best-seller list if she'd have bought all the copies herself. If you said, 'Have you read "Spin Cycle"?' she would have thought it was a washing-machine manual!" The more Imus talked, the more agitated he became. Looking at his sidekicks, he announced that they would murder both Romanos and Simon & Schuster: "So here's the new policy. We are never, ever, in the history of this program—ever!—going to have an author on this show who has a book at Simon & Schuster.... Why would you want to go on the No. 2 show?"

Another lifetime ban? When I later asked Imus how long the ban would last, he said, "It lasts until the photography book my brother and I are doing for them comes out!"

To listeners who enjoy the act, Imus appears to be a man who says whatever he pleases. He won't build a church on the Ranch, and to hell with listeners who ask him to. He makes fun of Jews, blacks, Italians, feminists, Cardinal O'Connor. On April 27th, he shook a bottle of pills, and announced that he would conduct an on-air experiment with the impotence drug Viagra; he handed one tablet each to various male employees (exempting himself), and kept asking how things were going. "I'm pretty much a no-bullshit deal," Imus told me.

Mike Wallace compares Imus to Howard Stern, seeing both men as shock jocks and sometimes sophomoric jokesters. But Wallace also notes an enormous difference. "Stern is a crass vulgarian," he says. "Imus in his soul is a much gentler person." Imus reaches only about half as many listeners as Stern, but he is proud that his audience, unlike Stern's, is largely white collar. "We have a more upscale audience than NPR," he said. During the April 23rd show, Imus blurted out that he had received an invitation to critique the *Times* at a luncheon with the editorial-page editor, Howell Raines, and other executives from the newspaper. The invitation came from Sam Tanenhaus, a staff editor on the Op-Ed page, whose recent biography of Whittaker Chambers Imus has plugged. Imus, Tanenhaus wrote in the invitation, "might give us an idea or two for our sections and also give us a read on how the pages are doing."

The Don won't go, but he was pleased by this show of respect. ♦



SIP INTO SUMMER

by Ralph DiGennaro

At last, summer is almost here. The trees are sprouting buds from Shelter Island to Savannah. It's time to open the house on Fire Island; sweep out the cottage on Martha's Vineyard; slip on the linen shorts and step into a pair of comfortable sandals.

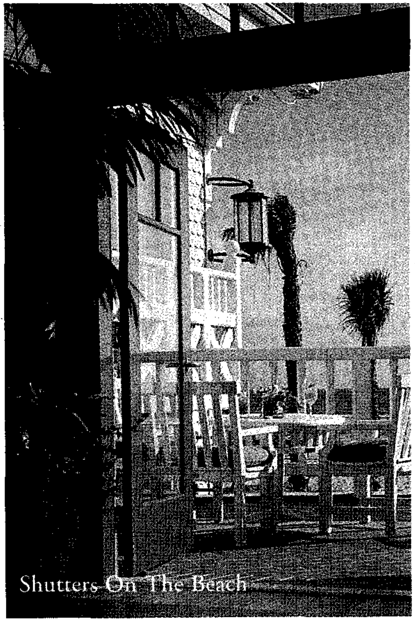
Finally you can forget all about mudslides, unless they're the kind made with mocha, coffee, and spirits, and shaken up to a tasty froth. So let it pour, as long as what's coming down is streaming from a bottle of Finlandia vodka and headed for a Martini glass as wide as an open window.

Pacific Dreams

What could be more relaxing than watching the sunset over the Pacific at one of the restaurants and bars on the stylish Del Mar Plaza in Del Mar near San Diego. Wander into the Pacifica Del Mar Restaurant and watch the surfers from the patio as they catch the final waves of the day. You can sit outdoors and sip one of the luscious fruit drinks that owner Jay Hendrick calls "Fruitations." Take your pick of mango, cantaloupe, tangerine, strawberry. The bartender will add a bit of rum or a shot of tequila and blend it into a frenzy. Daiquiris and Margaritas were never like this, but then again, neither was the view.

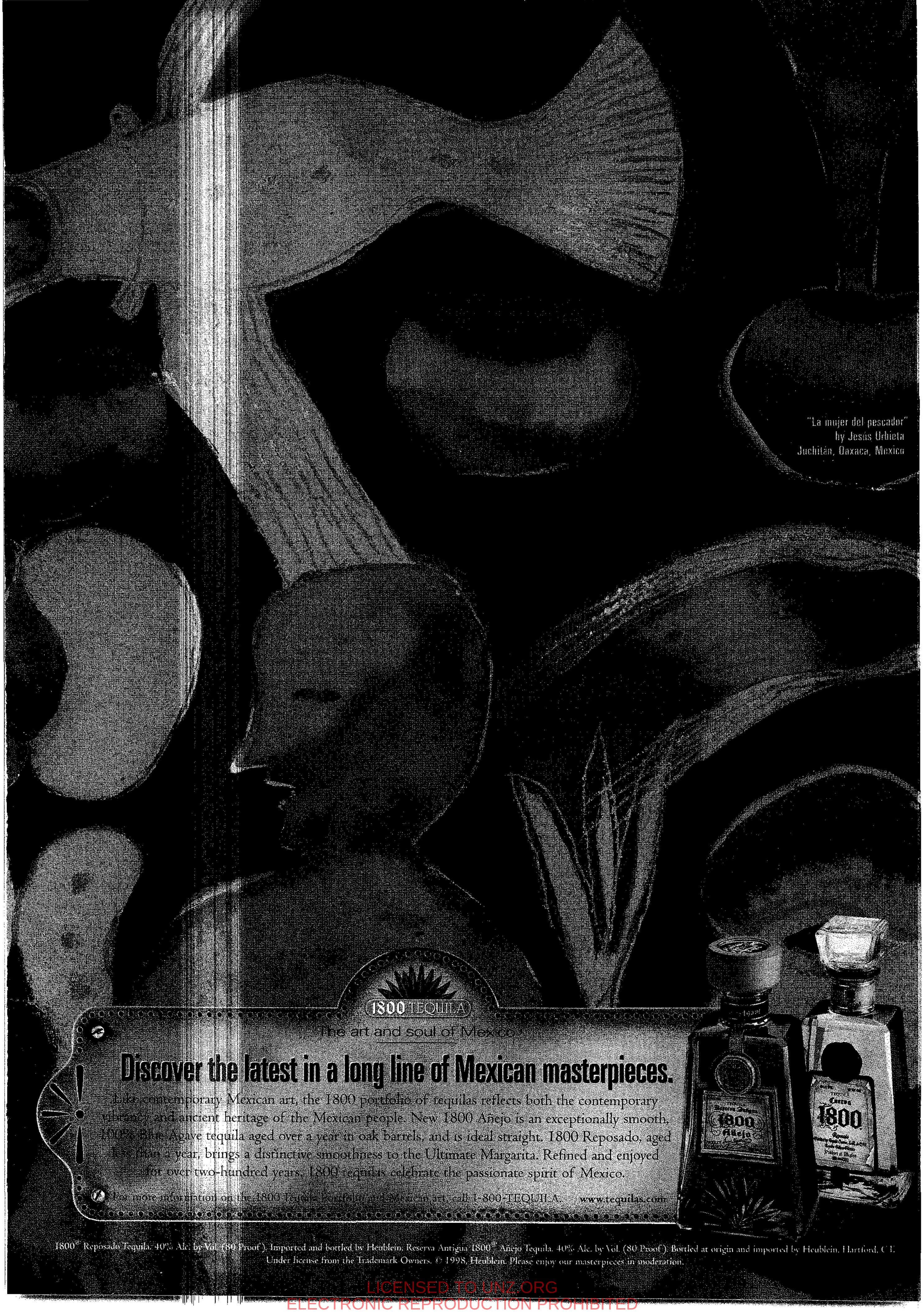
If a Southwest feeling is your thing, open and airy Epazote (next door on the Del Mar Plaza) is where shorts and loud print shirts are not only welcomed but encouraged. Or go down to the beach and step into Jake's, where the newest libations, like an Orange Blossom Margarita, are being put into circulation.

If you're headed for Santa Monica, four-star Shutters on the Beach is the perfect stylish outpost. Here, celebrities and tastemakers sit back, sip Cuervo 1800 premium tequila, and take in the sights.



Shutters On The Beach

Photo at the top by Paul Christensen/Graphistock



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East Hampton Point

Of Sandy Shores And Sunsets

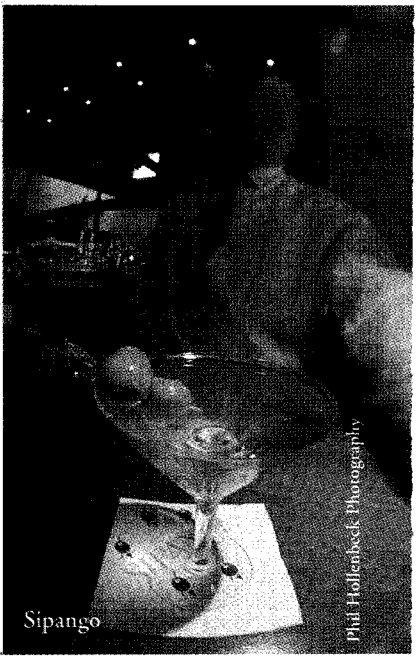
The beach is almost always a best bet on Long Island's East End, where the wide sandy strands and inland waterways beckon from Memorial Day through the end of September. Jerry Della Femina's East Hampton Point along Three Mile Harbor is the ultimate spot for watching sunsets, and chic New Yorkers clamor for tables out on a huge waterside deck. Known for its Perfect Margarita, the menu also entices with frozen drinks like Banana Cream Pie. (For a change of pace, drop by the Bridgehampton Polo Club's 1998 Mercedes-Benz Polo Challenge running for six consecutive Saturdays from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M. July 18th-August 22nd.)

On a small but pastoral patch of land midway between the North and South forks of Long Island, Shelter Island abounds with places to see and be seen. The most notable among them is André Balazs' Sunset Beach Hotel, a very "in" inn, where the Cosmopolitans are a work of art. And don't forget The Chequit, a 125-year-old Victorian inn, with an upstairs porch that attracts locals and day visitors alike.

West of Margaritaville

In downtown Dallas, where Stephan Pyles' Star Canyon on Oak Lawn Avenue stands as a temple of inventive New Texas cuisine, the frozen Margaritas are decidedly a cut above. The well-dressed patrons in lightweight Armani and Zegna suits line up two and three deep to toss back frozen mango or cactus Margaritas made from small-batch tequilas. "Our own peppered vodka is wildly popular," says general manager Reggie Parks. "We make this concoction ourselves with eight to ten different chilies including Anaheim, serrano, and jalapeño, and guests come in just for our peppered vodka Martinis." Over on Knox Street, the newly opened AquaKnox, another example of Pyles' culinary vision, is packing them in and has become Dallas's newest watering hole for cooling off in style.

Well into the night, fashionable Dallas turns out at Sipango. "Most of our customers are not into frozen drinks much," says owner Ron Corcoran. "But two Sipango original Bellinis—the Super Sipellini, topped with dark rum, and the raspberry Rasallini with a swirl of Chambord—are still big hits on a hot, Texas summer night."



Sipango

Phil Hollenbeck Photography

The Black Dog Tavern

Terry Pommett

Sipping On The Vineyard

When Bill and Hillary want to kick back in the summer they head for the scenic shores of Martha's Vineyard, where they may be found at The Black Dog Tavern (if you can get through the phalanx of secret service agents disguised in shorts and polos). Located in Vineyard Haven, a dry town, customers bring their own spirits to this island icon. A hostess confides, "We even have customers who mix their own Martinis." Now that's Yankee hospitality. Of a sort.

Oak Bluffs has bragging rights to the Vineyard's best (if only) brew pub restaurant, City Ale & Oyster, where there is a wide assortment of handcrafted English bitters, porters, imperial stouts, and German-styled wheat beers.

At Chesca's in Edgartown, general manager Andrew Graff reports that new wines from the southern hemisphere are becoming increasingly popular, particularly fruity South African pinot noirs and sauvignon blancs from New Zealand. "But we still have customers for specialty Martinis like our own fresh raspberry-infused double Martini."

For people-watching and casual imbibing, try The Wharf Pub or David Ryan's Restaurant Café in Edgartown. The intimate café-bar downstairs at Ryan's serves up a few truly unusual drinks like an Espresso Martini and a tropical Goombay Smash, which comes in a wide mason jar. "We serve them to a well-tanned, upscale crowd all day long and into the evening," says barkeep Bob O'Neil."

Summer fun is made all that more memorable by a cool libation, either sipped at a seaside café or while perched on a bar stool in one of the Southwest's trendiest taverns. A two-bourbon twilight painted with the smoke of a fine cigar… Memories are made of this.

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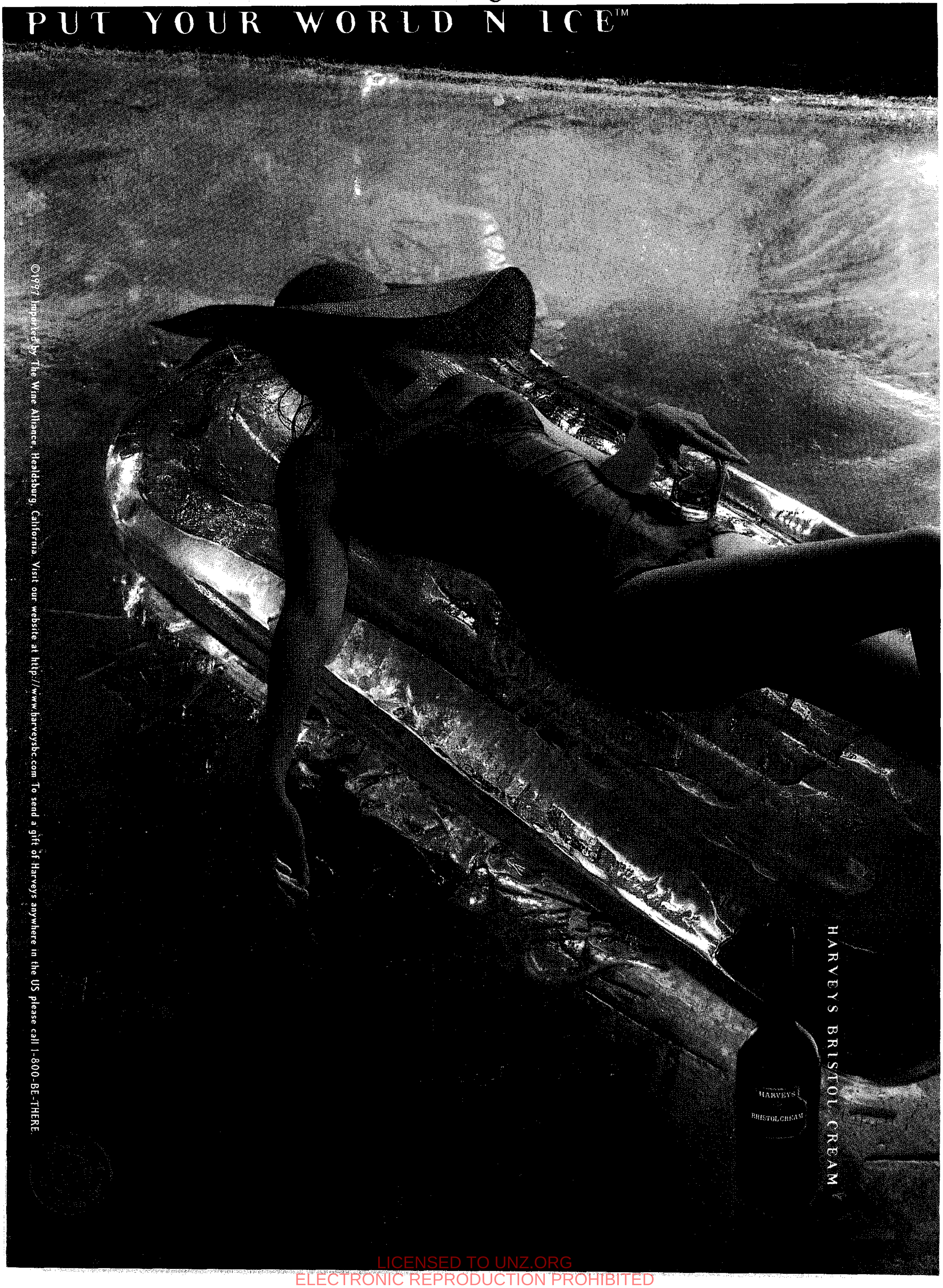
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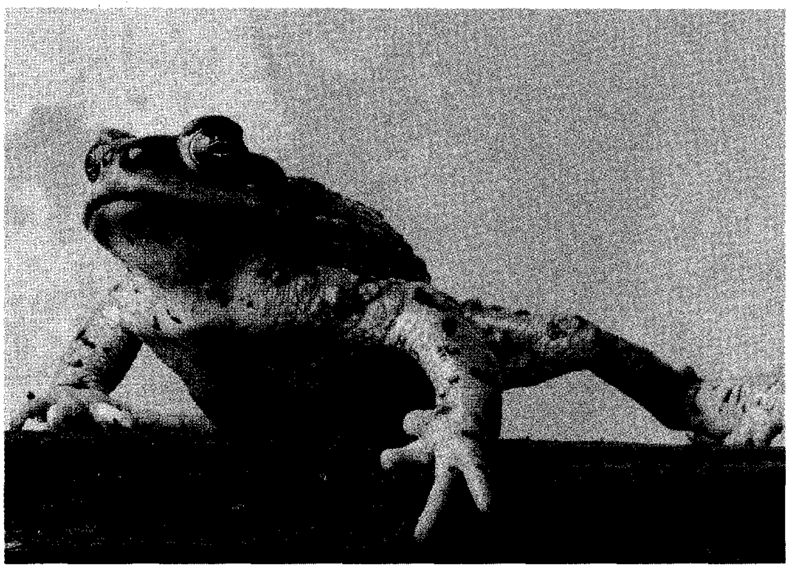
once i was a court jester. i hated that damn hat.



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THE ART OF FAILING

Some people are destined for greatness—what about the rest of us?

BY JAMES ATLAS

EUGÈNE MIHAESCO

"AND who is it you are lunching with today?" the maître d' asked me.

"Dean Valentine," I said.

"Ah! Mr. Valentine." His face lit up. "This way, please."

Clearly, Mr. Valentine was a figure of some stature at Orso's Los Angeles outpost—a "notable," as we say in Chicago. I already knew this from the *Times*, which had recently reported on his move from the presidency of Disney Television to a new job as the head of the United Paramount Network. The *Times* also ran an article mentioning his contemporary art collection, which includes a piece by Andrea Zittel, a young artist who creates life-sized "escape vehicles" to suit the fantasies of the buyer; Dean had commissioned one that resembled a Joseph Cornell box.

Even without the warm reception at Orso, I could have established from his phone etiquette how important Dean was now. When I had called up a few weeks earlier and asked to speak with him, his assistant had said, tersely, "Return?"—apparently a shorthand used by executives' assistants whose intense phone traffic makes it uneconomical for them to utter the whole sentence "Shall I ask him to return your call?" A day later, the assistant "returned." When I picked up the phone, he said, "I'll get Dean." In other words, Dean's time was too valuable for him to make a call himself. What amazed me, though, was the larger scenario: the transformation of Dean from the lost soul I'd known a decade ago—he was then kicking around the lower echelons of Time Inc., vaguely involved in magazine "startups" that never seemed to get started up—into a Hollywood mogul. In those days, he was a paunchy guy who sucked on Marlboro Lights, could put away a few drinks at lunch, and was chronically short of money. Now he was Dean Valentine.

I had met him at a poker game during a particularly low point in my own life, when I was between books and in the wrong job—writing a lacklustre publishing column for *Vanity Fair*. (That I was playing poker at all says something about where I was in those days: the only card game I play now is Go Fish.) Dean, the son of struggling Romanian émigrés, was a bitter, hostile character, but he'd read a lot of books, and we were in the same line of work. For a year or two in the mid-eighties, we spent—wasted, I should say—a fair amount of time together, drinking at Elaine's. I remember that one night Dean came over and helped me kill off a fifth of Wild Turkey and then we grabbed a cab down to some dank, grottolike club—the Tunnel?—

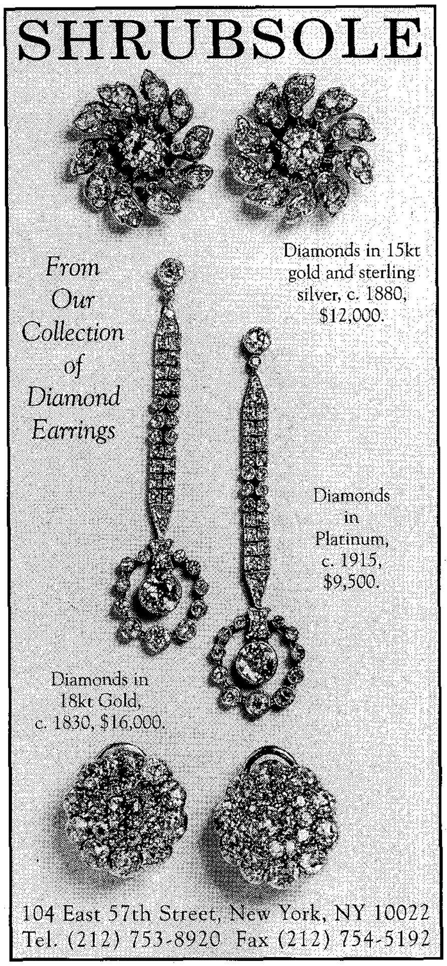

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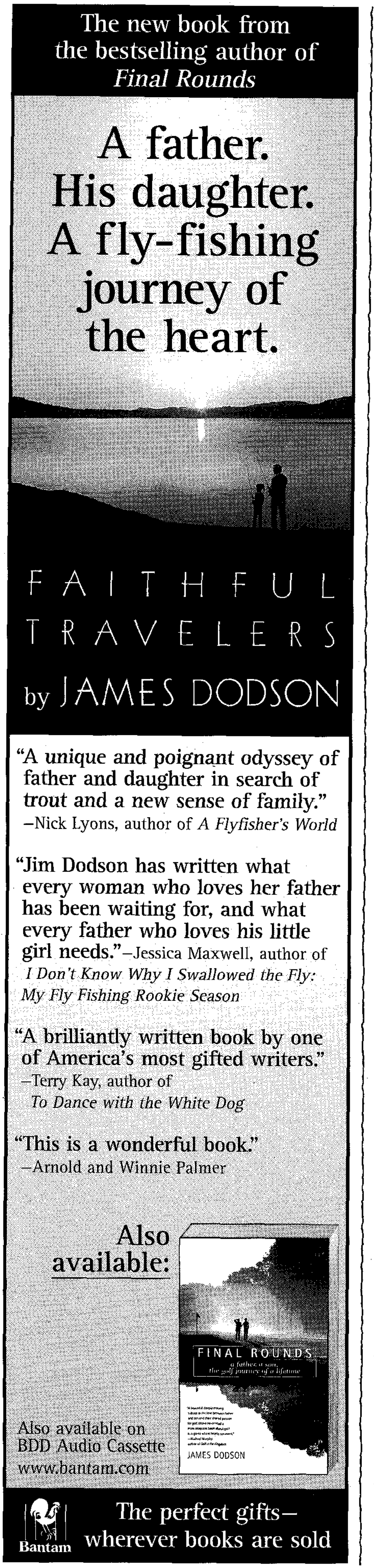
PHOTO BY RICHARD CORMAN.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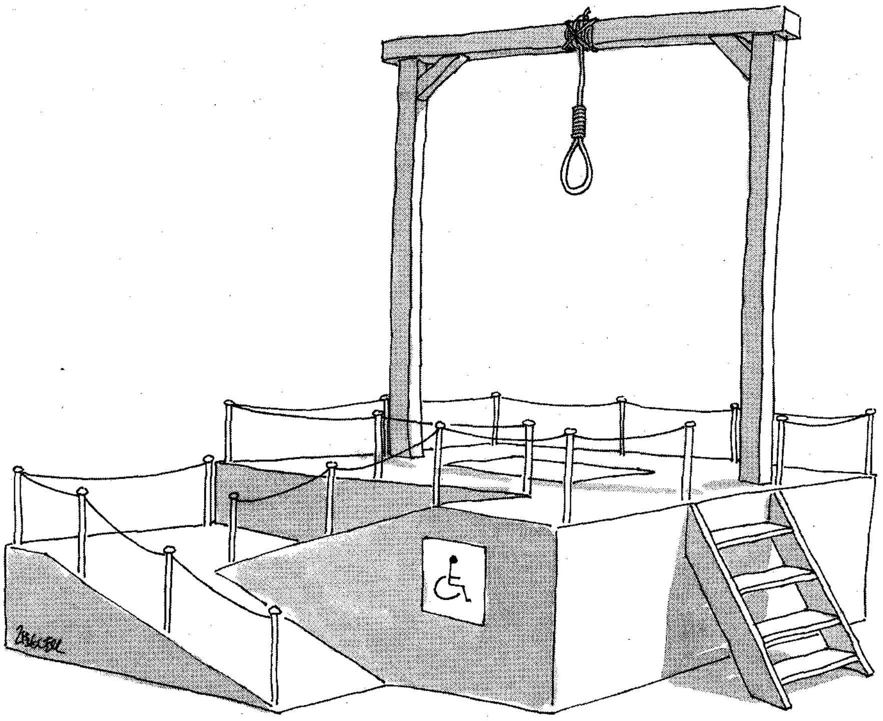

and drank some more. The night became progressively hazy: a man with a parrot took a Polaroid of us gazing heavy-lidded at the camera, with the bird perching on my shoulder. The evening ended at around two in the morning, after we got into a pointless argument about whether J. D. Salinger ever wrote anything good after "The Catcher in the Rye."

I didn't see Dean again for a few months. In the meantime, he had given up on the magazine world and gone out to L.A. to try his luck in the television industry. I called him up when I was out there to do a profile of Joan Didion and met him for a drink. He was living in a cramped sublet, and he seemed pretty down. But he had a job, at least: he had got into a Saturday softball game with some guys in TV and had met the legendary sitcom impresario Brandon Tartikoff. "Brandon said he wants me to come work for him." *Brandon*. I was impressed.

Years passed, and I lost touch with Dean. One day, about four years later, I was reading the *Times*, and I came upon a photograph of a trim, well-tailored executive identified as Richard Frank, the president of the Walt Disney Studios; beside him stood another trim, well-tailored executive. The two men were smiling broadly. They had the fit, California bodies that bespeak the services of a personal trainer. Something about the photograph caught my eye. The face on the left: it was so familiar, and yet I couldn't quite place it. My wife, Anna, was reading over my shoulder. "Isn't that Dean?" she asked. I glanced at the caption: "At left is Dean Valentine." He wasn't actually quoted in the piece, but he was in the picture, as it were, standing next to the president of Walt Disney Studios and looking as if he belonged there.

NOW it felt strange to be sitting in Orso with a notepad, waiting to interview an old friend. But Dean was the starkest instance of the phenomenon I wanted to explore: Who made it in life? And what did it mean to "make it," anyway? I had reached the age when, whether you were conscious of it or not, you were always taking stock—not just the momentary game of who's up and who's down but the long-term evaluation of people's lives in general, your own among them. While in L.A., I was reading a new novel by Brian Morton, "Starting Out in the Evening," in which a thirty-nine-year-old woman in midlife crisis says, "When you're in your twenties, when you're in your early thirties, you can tell yourself a nice story about your life: 'I'm young, I have promise, I have everything going for me.' But when you can't tell yourself that story anymore, what *are* you? You're storyless." A lot of the people I know are storyless.

My reverie was interrupted by the sight of Dean striding into the restaurant. "Dean!" We embraced the way I'd seen men do in L.A., kissing each other on the cheek. He looked his age—forty-four—and he had lost a lot of hair, but he'd grown a compensatory beard, which made him look like a Los Angeles Lenin. I was glad to see that he hadn't turned into my idea of a Hollywood studio executive—an image confirmed by the shades and Armani turtlenecks I'd spotted in the Sky Bar, at the Mondrian, the night before. Instead, he was wearing a green flannel shirt and faded Levi's, and he could have been a professor of English having Sunday lunch at Jimmy's Tavern, in Hyde Park—not surprisingly, perhaps, since for Dean academia was the road not taken. He had majored in English at the University of Chicago. "My ambition was to get a Ph.D. and teach Shakespeare," he told me after we ordered and I began to draw him out about how he'd got from there to here. But he apparently hadn't been a shining light in the English department; one of his professors had gently suggested that he move on.

In 1976, after working as a manuscript reader at the offices of the magazine *Poetry*, in Chicago (a job I'd had before Dean, which is how we first met), he moved to New York and held a succession of dismal jobs: night clerk at the Hotel Esplanade, a dowdy establishment on West End Avenue which catered to the elderly; a brief stint as the theatre critic for *Our Town*, an Upper East Side handout paper ("It was a cheap way to get free tickets to take out girls"); and a two-year tenure at *The New Leader*, a small-circulation biweekly in the shadow of *The Nation* and *The New Republic*, where he toiled away in what he described to me as "a miserable hovel of an office." He continued, "My title was associate editor, but there were only two of us. I wasn't really sure that any living human beings even read *The New Leader*, and that was always a source of some anxiety." After this bleak servitude, Dean landed a job at *The Saturday Review*, but he was fired just before it was sold. Two magazine jobs and one "development" position later—this was around the time we met—he found himself articles editor at *Life*: "It was the loneliest job in journalism, like being picture editor of the Talmud."

In 1986, Dean went out to California on assignment for *Life* to do a story on some guy who had made a replica of a pterodactyl in Death Valley, and stumbled into the weekly media softball game in L.A. That was when he met Brandon. "A lot of people had left NBC for the Fox startup, and they needed bodies," he said. "Also, I actually loved TV. I can still remember Dad wrestling our first TV out of the trunk of our '57 used Chevy Bel Air and carrying it up the stairs in St. Paul, Minnesota. I learned English through TV, sitting around with Mom and Dad on Saturday morning and watching 'Mighty Mouse.' It was so much a

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part of my life that I didn't know it."

Dean spent two years at NBC, and then jumped to Disney. "It was a lateral move at best," he went on, "but I'd read a lot about Eisner and Katzenberg, and I thought, What the hell? It was the best thing I ever did. Michael and Jeffrey were tremendous role models. They're not angels—these are difficult men—but you didn't get lost in the bullshit with them. They were like a bunch of loud, obnoxious uncles around the Thanksgiving dinner table. Arguing with them made you stronger." Dean grew with the division. He became president of Walt Disney Television and Television Animation just before Walt Disney bought ABC. "ABC was third in the children's division on Saturday morning when I took it over. When I left, it was the No. 1 network."

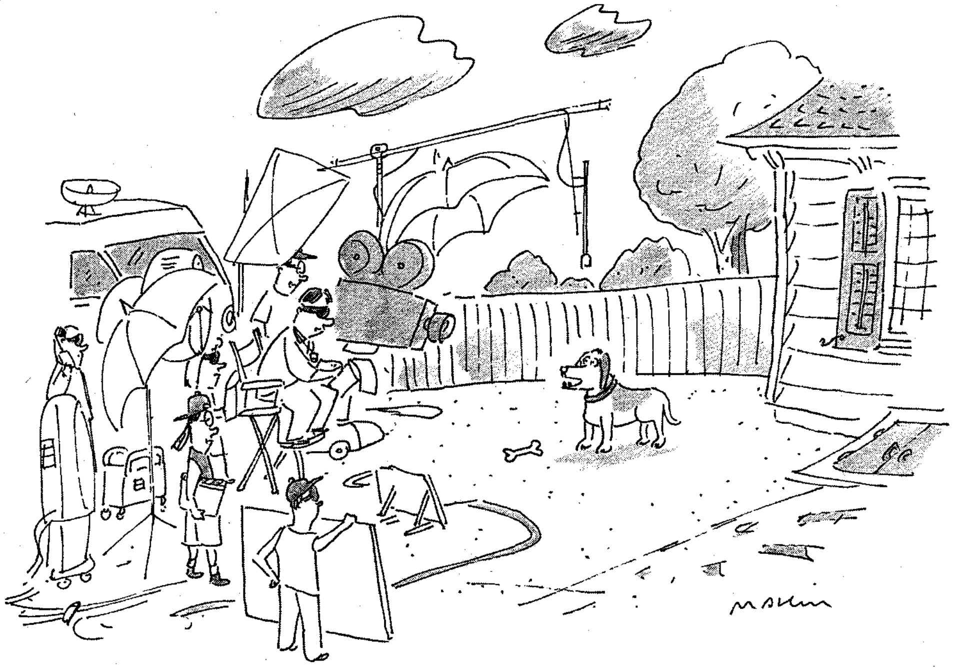
What had he learned during his long climb to the top? By the time I asked him that, it was midafternoon, and Orso was nearly empty. Dean thought for a moment. "I learned that you never have to accept any givens," he told me. "There are no rules. During the writers' strike"—in the late eighties—"I realized that I could pick up the phone and make it happen on my own. There used to be an Eastern European part of me that thought things would turn out badly. Now I've become more of an American. I'm optimistic. Journalism was just the wrong path for me. I was trying to please my parents. It wasn't what I really loved. If I'd got a job at the *Times*, I would have been like the guy in the Western they throw through the plate-glass window. 'Get out and stay out—we don't want to see you around here.' "

As we left the restaurant and handed our tickets to the parking attendant, a final question popped into my head. What kind of car would Dean be driving? The attendant pulled up in a black BMW 740. Nice, very nice. But not too fancy—not a Jaguar or a Porsche. As Dean drove off, I remembered something he had said to me when I called. "I'm shocked that success has meant so little to me," he'd confided. "I'm still very driven. I want to do well. And success has helped me with my insecurity. But—I know this sounds weird—it seems increasingly irrelevant. It never feels real from the inside."

I love the guy.

BRUCE WAGNER'S Los Angeles novel, "I'm Losing You," contains a terrific satirical description of a journalist interviewing a Hollywood producer for a magazine profile and prospecting for the usual rags-to-riches scenario:

> unhappy childhood bits with foreshadowings of the "inveterate dreamer" (quotes from grade school teachers preferred, along with fuzzy photo of the buck-toothed, incipient Barnum surrounded by classmates/future losers); a little false-starts/years of failure/turning-point shtick.



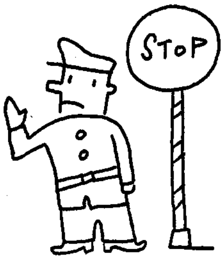
"O.K., so I dig a hole and put the bone in the hole. But what's my motivation for burying it?"

I have a weakness for this kind of story—especially the "false-starts/years of failure" part. I like hearing about Joseph Heller's decade of anonymous toil at various magazines while he was writing "Catch-22," and about E. L. Doctorow's protracted career in book publishing before he hit it big with "Ragtime." I have a note on my bulletin board with a quote from Lionel Trilling: "Freud was thirty-six before he began to do the work that made him famous."

I'm a democrat where failure is concerned, fascinated by its manifestation in every walk of life. Reading "A Prayer for the City," Buzz Bissinger's portrait of the celebrated Philadelphia mayor Edward Rendell, I was gripped by his account of Rendell's career in its early stages. Having lost in the 1987 Democratic mayoral primary, Rendell "had been given up for dead," Bissinger writes. "Sitting behind a shiny and empty desk, playing with a little pile of paper clips that his secretary had set out for him . . . he seemed lost. There was something sheepish about him, something insecure." As Martin Amis said at a crowded reading he gave in New York last year, "We *live* in our failures. We don't go around congratulating ourselves for our successes. It's those terrible gaffes, those terrible flops that make our hands fly to our faces, that make us stop dead on the street and babble to drown out the memory."

ON an unnaturally warm Sunday evening in the spring of 1986 (and I can still recall the date: May 18th), I left my apartment, on the Upper West Side, in quest of a Monday *Times*. I had learned that it would carry Christopher Lehmann-Haupt's make-or-break review of my first novel, a coming-of-age story about a Chicago Jewish boy in love with literature. There was a newsstand on the corner of Seventy-second Street and Broadway where you could get the next day's paper at eleven o'clock the night before. At ten of eleven, I was loitering beneath the buzzing neon sign of Gray's Papaya, waiting for the bundle of papers to be thrown off the delivery truck. Minutes later, I stood reading Lehmann-

Haupt's review with trembling hands while scraps of trash swirled around my feet. A persistent search among my papers turns up no trace of this review, or of Jonathan Yardley's equally vicious dismissal in the Washington *Post.* They must have been too painful to keep. But I can recite from memory the last phrase of Leslie Fiedler's demo job in the *Times Book Review:* he admitted that he'd laughed, but he wasn't sure "who the joke was on." And I can also recite the conclusion of Sven Birkerts's assessment in *The New Republic;* alluding to a Joycean image of melting-winged Icarus plunging from the sky in my novel, the kindly Birkerts concluded, "I fear he will not make it."



On the night of Lehmann-Haupt's verdict, I lay rigid in bed, listening to the angry horns of taxis down on the street. I was thirty-seven. It wasn't as if I hadn't failed before. When I was twenty-four, I had written a hundred pages of a novel about a strange, reclusive writer living in squalor on the North Side of Chicago, had sent it to Ted Solotaroff, the editor of the much admired *New American Review*, and had got a letter back all but offering me a book contract. Could he just see another chapter or two before he tried to get the go-ahead? Solotaroff was a god to me—writer of deep essays, friend of Philip Roth, occupant of the red-hot center of American literary life. Ecstatic, I hurried off to my neighborhood bar, the Plough and the Stars, and downed a few pints of Guinness. (That was how I dealt with success in those days: by getting drunk.) During the next few days, I knocked out the chapter that Solotaroff was eagerly awaiting: it came easily. Comic, J. P. Donleavy-like scenes involving the writer's dwarf uncle, a poetry-spouting mynah bird, and other picaresque details spilled forth from my electric typewriter. I dispatched the manuscript and waited for the response, pacing up and down in my apartment like a madman out of Poe as I listened for the mail to drop through the slot each day. Finally, a fat envelope arrived. It contained my manuscript and a letter that read, "I'm sorry to have to write in this way, to deliver a bucket of cold water on a work in progress. . . . " I had somehow gone off in a wrong direction, broken the spell I'd managed to create in my original submission, which captured the drab, wintry Chicago I really knew. I crawled under the dining-room table in my sparsely furnished apartment, curled up on the cold floor, and wept.

But to fail when you're in your early twenties is of a different order of magnitude from failing in your late thirties. The day that Lehmann-Haupt's damaging review came out, I sat at my computer screen all day, doggedly pushing on with my work in progress—a novel about a struggling novelist in New York whose child almost dies of meningitis—and fielding congratulatory phone calls from people who were impressed by the sight of my photograph in the paper and hadn't read the review. I knew that it was important to keep going—to show Lehmann-Haupt that I wouldn't be shut down. A few weeks later, I stopped in the middle of a sentence—"Jesse's not breathing!"—and turned off my computer. I never wrote another line of fiction.

The American belief in perpetual self-improvement requires you to go on to the next big thing in the name of "new challenges," even if doing so means being promoted beyond your natural abilities or simply landing in the wrong job (the writer who becomes an editor because that's how you climb the corporate ladder but who hates administration; the distinguished critic who joins a glossy newsweekly and discovers that she hates it). The novel was supposed to be *my* next big thing, and since my first published book, a biography of Delmore Schwartz, had got favorable reviews, how could it not do well? The omens had been good: an auction that netted a substantial advance; an announced first printing of thirty thousand and a glossy-looking advance proof for reviewers; a lucrative sale to England. "I'm sure it will take off," I'd breezily informed my parents.

In the end, the novel sold six thousand copies; the rest got pulped. It's not enough to say that I took it hard; it felt as if a death had occurred—the death of hope. In my journal I drew up desperate lists of "people who liked the book." I saw myself as an outcast, my life as a series of ir-

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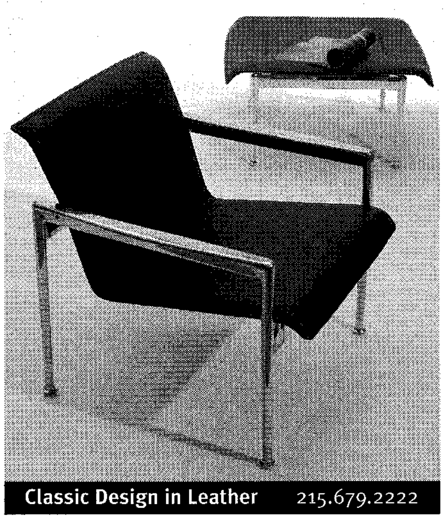

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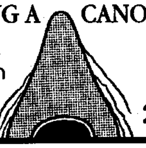

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retrievably squandered opportunities. A sample of my journals from these years:

> I was out of control, buying—for the first time in months—a pack of Luckies, standing and smoking at a pizza counter.
>
> It's as if there's a wall of glass between me and people who are successful.
>
> Things were going somewhat better for the last two days; then I heard that Ben Sonnenberg [the editor of *Grand Street*] had a party last night to which we weren't invited, and it dawned on me—again—that I've utterly forfeited my place in the New York literary world.

"Again" is right: the journal is a stupefyingly repetitious record of my refusal to grasp the limits of my own character and talents; to recognize what I was (and wasn't), and live with it. I may have been a writer, but I wasn't a novelist—that exalted, larger-than-life figure revered by generations of high-school English teachers.

Eventually, after a few years of therapy, I came out of my depression. I got a job that I liked; found a book that I wanted to write; and bade a wrenching farewell to my boundless self-pity. At first, writing was slow work: I'd grown attached to the notion that failure was my irrevocable fate. But gradually I began to see my novelistic Waterloo for what it was. I remember a review of my Delmore Schwartz biography in which the reviewer said that the book was "peppy"—that it was less the work of a scholar than the work of someone who liked to talk on the phone with a cup of steaming coffee by his side. At the time, my feelings were hurt. Wasn't the reviewer saying, in a nice way, that I was a lightweight? I now read it differently: the reviewer had simply been responding to my temperament—eager, energetic, more at home with interviews than with texts—as it revealed itself on the page. That was who I was: take it or leave it. In Dean Valentine's Joseph Cornell box, there's a photograph of him and his parents getting off the boat from Europe to begin a new life in America. "The idea of escape is a fiction," he said to me when he was describing the picture. "You travel with yourself wherever you are."

I OFTEN take down from the shelf one of the most haunting books in my collection: "Harvard and Radcliffe Class of 1971 Twenty-fifth Anniversary Report." At a thousand three hundred and five pages, it's also one of the fattest—as wide as my two-volume Proust. Nearly two years after the reunion, I still haven't got to the end of it. What makes this compendious anthology so compelling? I think it's the momentousness of the milestone being commemorated: we're not at the beginning, full of bravado and false hope; we're not at the end, glad that we haven't turned up in the obit column yet. We're just young enough to be uncowed by the prospect of our own imminent mortality yet mature enough to be capable of taking stock. One classmate, whose brother and sister have both died of cancer, writes, "Less painful, but more nagging, has been the recognition of the limits of my professional abilities." At forty-seven, he has discovered that he is "only one of many little guys in a field funded by a few giants," and he notes, "I don't think Stockholm will ever be calling." Another classmate, a former employee of the U.S. Postal Service, pours out an agonized lament over his inability to finish his dissertation, his failure to get married, to stay in a job: "If there's anything that sums up the past twenty-five years for me, it's a paucity of major commitments, i.e., to a specific career, to a woman. But my fundamental commitment deficit has been to myself, i.e., a reluctance to accept myself for what I am, both my strengths and my foibles."

The successes, by contrast, emanate a cheery unreality. "I have been fortunate to live the American entrepreneurial dream," writes Thomas Stemberg, the founder of Staples. (I also read on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* that Stemberg was involved in one of the more notorious divorces in Massachusetts legal history, but never mind.) "So far, the road has been quite smooth," writes Tom Werner, of the Carsey-Werner Company, the producer of "Roseanne," "The Cosby Show," and other mega-hits, in a sweetly self-effacing confession. Frank Rich, a columnist for the *Times*, gets closer when he writes, "I ended up doing in life exactly what I fantasized about doing when I arrived at Harvard—working for a newspaper and writing about culture and politics," but goes on to acknowledge that the road has, in fact, not been quite smooth: "Still, that simple description of where

I am now masks the turmoil, some of it painful, of the years between graduation and today: the agonizing collapse of a first marriage; the violent and premature death of my mother; the grotesquely premature death of friends."

And these are the privileged ones—"Harvards," my grandmother used to call them. What about my friends from high school, many of them talented in one way or another, who flamed out? What happened to the boy I'll call Ben, who would empty a six-pack of Budweiser that he'd bought from a drunk in the parking lot of Howard Liquors, lock the door of his bedroom, and accompany a Roland Kirk album turned up at full blast on his saxophone? I can see him now, eyes tightly shut, a Camel smoldering in the ashtray. He's gone, who knows where. Or the friend who wanted to be a documentary filmmaker and ended up writing ad copy, or the poet who studied Japanese and disappeared into a state mental institution? They, too, had promise. They, too, possessed that radiant nimbus that surrounds the gifted—what a writer I know calls "the Shine." Unfortunately, they were also missing some other necessary quality: stamina, discipline, a tolerance for risk. Maybe they had intractable conflicts with their parents; maybe they were addiction-prone. Maybe they were poor, and didn't have the luxury of failing and starting over. Maybe success just wasn't in the cards.

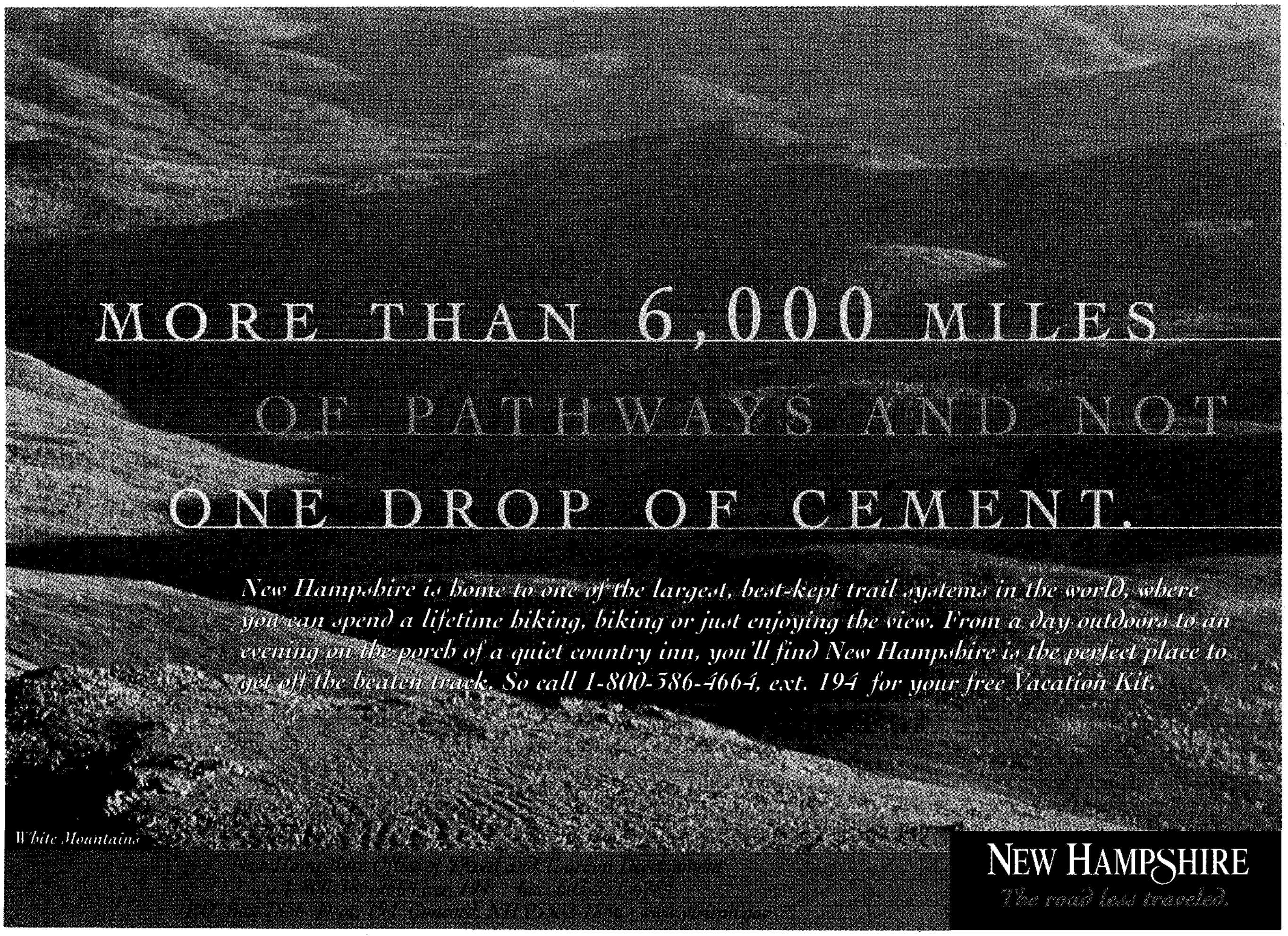
It's such an American notion to think of success and failure as the only two possible outcomes in life—to divide the world, as *Time* now does, into "Winners & Losers" (James Carville versus Kenneth Starr, Bill Clinton versus Paula Jones). Whenever I read this column, with its tone of vindictive gloating, I think of F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous observation that the mark of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two contrary ideas in the mind at the same time. We assign the category of success so blindly to the rich, the powerful, the well known; what of those for whom success is more nearly anonymous? My friend who restores nineteenth-century photographs doesn't get his name on Page Six, but he's doing exactly what he wants to do. The examined life and the public life are by no means the same thing.

In recent weeks, Dean Valentine has turned up twice in the pages of the *Post:* once in an article about the fledgling broadcast network Dean is heading, United Paramount, and again in a piece about top executives leaving Disney. The first piece wasn't entirely upbeat: UPN reportedly lost a hundred and seventy-five million dollars last year. But Dean had always worked in startups; in fact, he preferred them, as he'd confessed to me at Orso. "The zero-to-sixty part is more fun than the sixty-to-ninety part."

I can add this to what I've come to think of as Dean's mantras: "I just kept at it," "There was a huge amount of luck," and "I'm glad I got to do things my way—it was thematically correct." In other words, Dean has finally come up with the right story.

"Are you still important?" I joked when I called him up a few weeks later (or, rather, when he "returned").

Dean laughed. "Not to me." ♦



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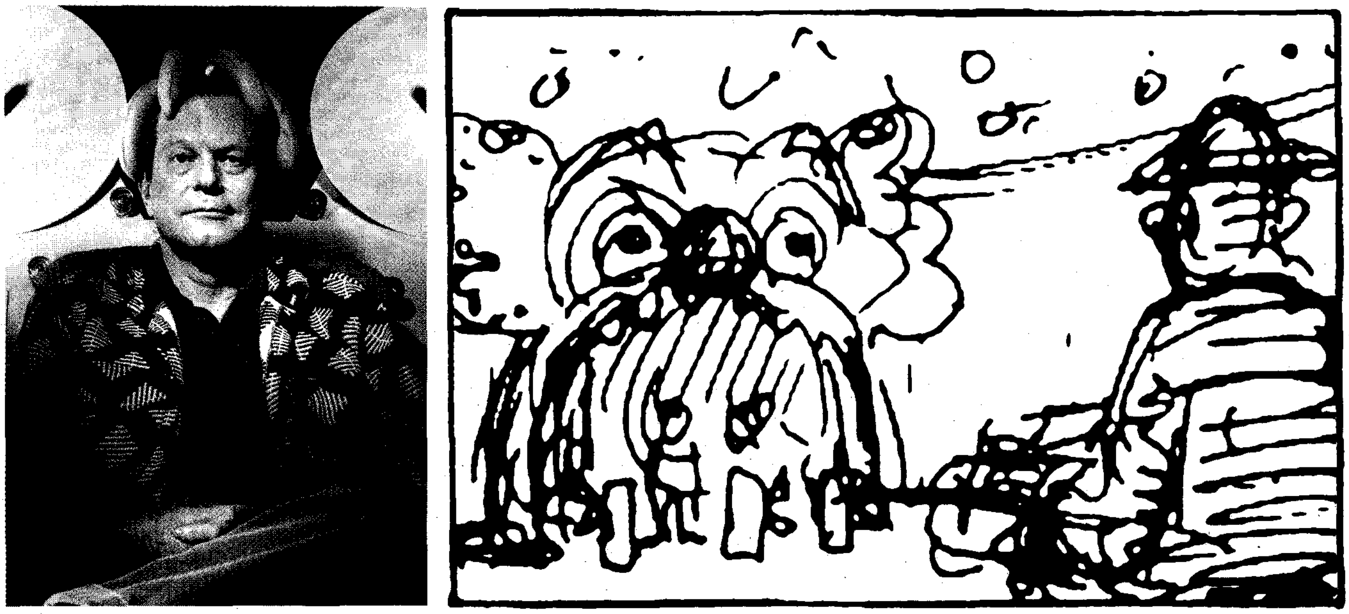
PROFILE

WAR GAMES

After battling Orwellian bureaucracies and apocalyptic plagues, Terry Gilliam takes on the gonzo journalist Dr. Hunter S. Thompson.

BY GILES SMITH



Terry Gilliam in Gilliamesque regalia; the director's sketch for a phantasmagoric scene from "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas."

PHOTOGRAPH BY DUDLEY REED

THE automobile that Universal Pictures supplied for Terry Gilliam during a recent visit to Los Angeles looked like something to be grateful for—a blood-red Ford Mustang GT convertible with gleaming chrome trim, beige leather upholstery, and little more than four hundred miles on the odometer. But last March, when I met Gilliam at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, he was wearing an extremely aggrieved look as he set about unclipping the Mustang's cloth top.

"Nice car," I said.

"Too nice," he growled. "I asked for a cheaper one. I mean, they're cutting costs everywhere else, but then I get *this.*"

Gilliam, who was in the final stages of editing his new film, "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas," which is based on Hunter S. Thompson's 1971 book about getting stoned and out of control in the dropout decade, had flown to the United States in March from his base, in London—first, to attend a reunion of his old comedy team Monty Python's Flying Circus, in Aspen, and then to do battle with the Writers Guild of America, in Los Angeles. This body had ruled, after much adjudication, that credit for the "Fear and Loathing" screenplay would go to Alex Cox, the film's initial director, and his co-screenwriter, Tod Davies, even though, Gilliam said, he and *his* co-screenwriter, Tony Grisoni, had started over from scratch after Cox and Davies dropped out of the project, in 1996.

Gilliam, who was wearing a floppy cowboy hat and a crumpled white shirt, and whose graying hair was pulled back and tied in a ponytail, climbed into the Mustang's front seat. As we set off, the radio was playing, at high volume, the Rolling Stones' "Start Me Up." For the next half hour or so, until we arrived at Universal's headquarters, in Universal City, for a meeting with executives about the impending release of "Fear and Loathing," Gilliam, who is fifty-seven, kept up a running tirade against "this screenplay madness," during which he compared the behavior of the Writers Guild to novels by Franz Kafka and George Orwell, and also to some of the less savory practices of General Pinochet, pausing twice to slam a hand against the horn and shout, "Outta the fucking way!"

Even as a member of the iconoclastic Pythons, Gilliam—the sole American in the six-man group—was the consummate outsider, battling against being let in. "Terry loves the world and is enthused by it," his fellow-Python Michael Palin had told me. "But he does always need to feel that there's some battle he's engaging in. That's in all his films and it's in his life—that there's a war out there and it's them against us. He likes the state of permanent conflict."

Hurtling along in Gilliam's Mustang, I recalled an afternoon a few weeks earlier, when I'd dropped in on Gilliam in his editing suite in London, during the cutting of "Fear and Loathing." It hadn't taken me long to recognize that moment when Gilliam began to sense the hostile appearance of some impediment to his vision: his eyes darted from side to side, his mouth turned steeply downward. At one point, an assistant brought him the news that the cost of securing a particular piece of music by the Rolling Stones, which he wanted for the film's soundtrack, would exceed the budget. Gilliam exploded. "To start pulling things off the soundtrack now is a fuck!" he said to the music editor, Kevin Lane. "I think we should make the score work and dub it. And if we have a problem with cost, well, someone can come along and fix it. It's just money. This film is the bargain of the century is the truth of it." For good measure, he added, “Lives come and go. Films last forever.”

These are not sentiments likely to endear Gilliam to studio executives, but then, in a directorial career spanning twenty-four years and seven films (including the Orwellian “Brazil” and the alarming sci-fi thriller “Twelve Monkeys”), pleasing the people who put up money for movies has not been one of Gilliam’s priorities. Over the years, something that has come to be called “a Terry Gilliam film” has emerged. It is characterized by, among other things, a taste for outrageous fantasy, a contempt for conventional behavior, an interest in the curious affinities between people and reptiles, and a distinct liking for dwarfs, giants, and men with shaved heads.

Gilliam often mentions something else that has marked his work: the eerie way in which parallels tend to develop between his films’ plots and backstage events during their production. For example, the shooting of “Brazil”—which concerned one man’s battles with an infinitely recessive bureaucracy—culminated in Gilliam’s being locked in combat with Sidney Sheinberg, the ultimate boss at Universal Pictures. Sheinberg wanted substantial cuts and a happy ending. Gilliam didn’t. Without Universal’s approval, he arranged for an uncut version of the film to be screened for the Los Angeles Film Critics Association. When the critics, somewhat mischievously, named “Brazil” the best film of 1985, Universal had little choice but to release it in the form that Gilliam wanted.

Then there was “The Adventures of Baron Munchausen,” which Gilliam adapted from Rudolph Raspe’s account, published in 1785, of a self-invented Hanoverian nobleman and spinner of tall tales. In 1979, George Harrison had shown Gilliam his collection of Raspe editions, some of which included illustrations by Gustave Doré, and these had fired Gilliam’s imagination. Once again, the backstage story threatened to eclipse the story onscreen, as the film’s budget spiralled from twenty-three million dollars to forty-six million dollars in a gale of misfortunes and misunderstandings. “It will last,” Gilliam declared after “Baron Munchausen” had flopped at the box office. “We’ll all be dust.”

For much of the filming of “Fear and Loathing,” everything went remarkably smoothly. Then came the Writers Guild decision about the screenplay credits, and Gilliam was restored to his full element. “This is war!” he shouted, above the roar of the Mustang. “I am now Ken Kesey!” He let out a maniacal, high-pitched laugh.

GILLIAM was eleven when his family moved from Minneapolis to Panorama City, California, in 1952. He remembers thinking that he would find cowboys there. Instead, he found neat, brand-new suburban houses—“mustard-yellow houses and pistachio-green houses,” he recalls, “just like in ‘Edward Scissorhands.’ ” Gilliam, whose father worked as a carpenter, went to Birmingham High School, in the San Fernando Valley, where he got straight A’s. He majored in political science at Occidental College, and after graduating, in 1962, he worked as a summer-camp counsellor and for a children’s-theatre company—“Painted myself green, played ogres, built castles,” he recalls.

Gilliam had long been a zealous cartoonist, and in 1962 he sent some drawings to *Help!*, a New York-based cartoon magazine. The cartoonist Harvey Kurtzman, who was the publisher of the magazine, wrote back advising him not to move to New York, but Gilliam moved anyway, and Kurtzman made him an assistant editor of *Help!* In New York, Gilliam met the English comedian John Cleese, who was appearing in a revue at Square East, in Greenwich Village. Much taken with Cleese’s glacially haughty facial expressions, Gilliam asked him to pose for a comic photo-story about a man who becomes sexually obsessed with a Barbie doll. “Altogether, pretty tasteless,” Cleese recalls, “and I don’t know if it was very funny.”

After three years at *Help!* and then six months of travelling in Europe, Gilliam returned to Los Angeles and moved in with his girlfriend at the time, Glenys Roberts, an English writer. Gilliam was unhappily employed as an art director and copywriter for an advertising agency. When Roberts decided to return home to London, in 1967, he went with her and set himself up as a freelance cartoonist and sketch writer. “Terry was getting a hundred bucks a month, and he couldn’t get arrested,” Roberts recalls. “Since he couldn’t afford drawing boards, he took all the doors off their hinges and set them on bricks, so that they ran around the inside of the house. He would start at one end on a Monday morning and work his way around.”

“London in 1967 was a masquerade ball,” Gilliam told me. “Crushed velvet, antique lace, wide-brimmed hats, silly people everywhere—and there was the contrast with City folk, in their bowler hats, who still did the proper thing. I loved it. I went round agog.” Gilliam met up again with John Cleese, and, at Cleese’s suggestion, he submitted some comic skits to Humphrey Barclay, the producer of a television show called “Do Not Adjust Your Set,” which starred Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin. Although it was nominally a children’s show, it was also, according to Cleese, “the funniest thing on television at the time.” When Gilliam arrived for his first meeting with his future Python partners, he was wearing a floor-length hand-painted Turkish coat and had long hair. “We were a bit sniffy and snooty,” Terry Jones recalls. “We didn’t eagerly and immediately say, ‘Yes, come and join the ship.’ ”

Gilliam soon proved his worth by contriving an animation sequence in which various Christmas-card scenes came alive: in one of them, a church spire launched itself like a rocket; in another, the Magi galloped on camels in pursuit of a strangely erratic star. “He made us laugh, and that brought us together,” Palin says. In 1969, Gilliam, Jones, Idle, and Palin came together with John Cleese and Graham Chapman to create “Monty Python’s Flying Circus.”

“MONTY PYTHON” ’S particular comedy of the absurd—its unleashings of the surreal and the unreasonable in settings as various as Army recruiting offices, pet shops, and the studios of television chat shows—was aimed at a peculiarly English brand of uptightness. It was also satire based on insider knowledge. Gilliam’s fellow-Pythons were all products of Oxford or Cambridge. Disdaining sixties trendiness, they continued to wear sports jackets with suède elbow patches, and—at least in the case of Graham Chapman—to smoke pipes.

Gilliam brought something looser to the mix. Although his contributions to the writing of the sketches were minor, his presence in them was unforgettable. The camera would find him—when it found him at all—on the periphery, en-

INDOLENCE

Beyond the corruption of both rust and moth,
I loaf and invite my soul, calmly I slump
On the crowded sidewalk, blissed to the gills on hemp;
Mine is a sanctified and holy sloth.

The guilty and polluted come to view
My meek tranquillity, the small tin cup
That sometimes runneth over. They fill it up
To assuage the torments they are subject to,

And hasten to the restoratives of sin,
While I, a flowerchild, beautiful and good,
Remain inert, as St. Matthew said I should:
I rest, I toil not, neither do I spin.

Think how this sound economy of right
And wrong wisely allows me to confer
On all the bustling who in their bustling err
Consciences of a pure and niveous white.

—ANTHONY HECHT

gaged in enterprises that were resolutely aloof from the main action. One celebrated shot, for instance, showed him dressed as a nun and exercising on a rowing machine. Gilliam's principal role in the "Python" series was to work out the sequences of animation that linked the sketches and, ultimately, gave them the look and tone that distinguished them from rival shows. Among these sequences, "The Killer Cars" is emblematic—a one-minute scenario in which pastel-colored Morris Minors are shown spreading a reign of terror over London until, finally, they are routed by a giant Siamese cat.

In the beginning, Gilliam worked out of a flat in Fulham in which he built a high, cantilevered platform for his desk and installed a dentist's chair. "I would do little storyboards and piece these things together," he says. "I had piles of stuff in files, and I would grab a sky from here, a head from there. I would make the sound effects, sitting under a blanket with a microphone and some kitchen utensils. Whenever I ran out of ideas, I would go down to the National Gallery and spend fifteen minutes just looking." The giant pink foot that abruptly falls down upon the opening credits—a defining "Python" moment—was cut from a reproduction of a painting by Bronzino. Jones recalls, "Gilliam's animation work made the show. The show became a stream of consciousness." Gilliam says, "There was no boss, no producer, no director saying you should be reaching a certain kind of audience—just six people doing it to make themselves laugh."

It was as a Python that Gilliam met his future wife, an Englishwoman named Maggie Weston, who was the show's makeup artist. They live with their three children—Amy, who is twenty-one; Holly, sixteen; and Harry, ten—in a magnificent seventeenth-century house in the North London village of Highgate. The house is stuffed with trophies from Gilliam's travels: a carved horse, wooden heads, friezes—"always big things," Michael Palin points out. Palin told me about a trip that he and Gilliam took to India in 1986. One day, they found themselves browsing in an antique shop in New Delhi. "I bought a couple of bowls and maybe a scarf," Palin recalls. "Terry bought the doors to the shop."

After four television series, two movies, and several tours with a stage show, the Python team eventually scaled down its operations, becoming a troupe that occasionally reconvened to make films. By 1974, Gilliam had begun to feel that he had little new to offer. "A side of me liked being onstage. But, on the other hand, it wasn't that satisfying. It's not what I felt I was meant to be doing—vomiting in my hat and putting it on my head."

Gilliam's first experience directing feature movies was in 1975 as co-director, with Terry Jones, of the spoof medieval saga "Monty Python and the Holy Grail." (Gilliam also acted in the film, co-wrote the screenplay, and made animation sequences.) Then, in 1977, he was director and co-writer of "Jabberwocky," another dirt-encrusted medieval fable, featuring an unlikely hero named Dennis. And he directed, produced, and co-wrote "Time Bandits" (1981), in which six time-travelling dwarfs emerge at night from the wardrobe of a schoolboy's bedroom. These films were independently financed and produced in Britain, and were stitched together in tiny premises in Covent Garden. "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" and "Life of Brian" (1979) were floated on money put up by George Harrison and the members of Jethro Tull, Pink Floyd, and Led Zeppelin. According to Gilliam, the rock stars were motivated by the prospect of huge losses that would afford them significant tax breaks. Noting that the films were a considerable success, Gilliam tells me happily, "We fucked them up taxwise for years."

Gilliam was soon offered bigger budgets by major studios. After the battles over "Brazil" and "Baron Munchausen," he worked as a hired hand, directing two movies he had not written: "The Fisher King," a contemporary romance with the structure of a medieval fable, and "Twelve Monkeys," a macabre fantasy about survivors of a plague who are reduced to living beneath the pavements of Philadelphia. He delivered both films on time, under budget, and without compromises. During the editing of "The Fisher King," the executives at Tri-Star argued that a brief cameo appearance by Tom Waits should be cut. "They said, 'This character is not advancing the narrative,' " Gilliam told me. "Bullshit. I hate that stuff. They've all learned these catchphrases, and sometimes they're applicable and sometimes they're not." Waits stayed in the movie. "My problem with Hollywood," Gilliam adds, "is that nobody says anything and believes it. It's all about maneuvering. Everything is fluid. And I keep finding that what I have to be is the one who stands still.”

FROM the moment Home Box Office announced that it was organizing the first stage performance of the Monty Python team in eighteen years—the cable network was filming the event as part of the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen—the news was greeted by Python fans with the sort of joy that might accompany a comeback tour by, say, The Who. Gilliam, however, was not cheered by the prospect of getting together with his old colleagues. “I don't think about Python anymore,” he said during our flight from London to the United States. “It feels like another person. It feels like a different life.”

On the day before the show, the five remaining Pythons—Graham Chapman had died of cancer, in 1989—gathered in a conference room at the St. Regis Hotel in Aspen, with a production staff from HBO. The evening was to be informal, but only in the television sense, which meant that there were many formalities to be gone through. The meeting had been in session no more than a few seconds when Gilliam put his elbow on the table, cradled his head in his hand, and began to draw on the yellow pad in front of him a picture of a man with a big nose. Over the next hour, his contributions to the discussion were mostly sardonic, in marked contrast to the eagerness shown by John Cleese and Eric Idle. As they talked up various ways of making the idea of a missing chair funny, Gilliam looked across the table at Terry Jones and winced. Only when the conversation moved on to the use of an urn containing the supposed remains of Graham Chapman did Gilliam become interested.

“I don't wish to sound sensitive,” Jones said, “but have we checked this with Graham's parents?”

“Fuck 'em,” Cleese said. “They're all dead.”

Gilliam said, suddenly urgent, “I just think we've got to do something where we spill the urn.” The idea was received enthusiastically.

When the meeting was over, Gilliam paced beside a window, gesticulating wildly with his hands. “God, I hate Python,” he said. “Or I hate the re-creation of Python. It's phony, it's fake, it's dumb. It's not what we *did*. Fuck it, I can't wait until tomorrow night's over.”

By show time, however, he had cooled considerably. He got to kick over the urn—a feat that was duly reported in the British newspapers, much to his satisfaction—and although he hadn't bothered to change a sweater he had been in all day, he had made one concession to show biz by putting on a pair of Day-Glo-yellow-and-pink suède shoes. But the next day, when the Python team made tentative plans to mark the show's thirtieth anniversary, in 1999, with a theatrical tour, Gilliam felt obliged to tell his old colleagues that he might be otherwise engaged.

WHEN Gilliam decided to direct “Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas,” he was taking on a project that had long been regarded as unfilmable. As Patrick Cassavetti, the English producer of the film, put it to me, “After all, the book doesn't offer much in the way of character, and it doesn't seem to go anywhere.” In Thompson's book, which began as an assignment to write about a motorbike race in the desert for *Sports Illustrated*, the author's enthusiasm for anything resembling conventional journalism is seriously compromised by an incautious consumption of cocaine, blotter acid, and mescaline. Instead of covering the race, he wanders, with his competitively reckless attorney, Doctor Gonzo, through the Vegas hotels and casinos in various stages of euphoria and paranoia.

Perhaps no director is better suited than Gilliam to give cinematic form to the book's drug-addled formlessness. Not that he was able to draw from firsthand experience. “The underground press was convinced that the Pythons were druggies, and that obviously I was on acid all the time,” he says. “We weren't druggies at all. They couldn't understand that this stuff came from minds that weren't enhanced by chemicals.” Still, paranoia, bad dreams, and fantastic disturbances figure, to one degree or another, in every Gilliam film. Moreover, Thompson's material is an open invitation to the director to indulge the subversive prankster in himself. “The world has become so tight-assed and P.C. and restrictive,” he says. “I thought, Let's just blow it all away with ‘Fear and Loathing.’ ”

Upon rereading the book, Gilliam found it more complex than he'd re-

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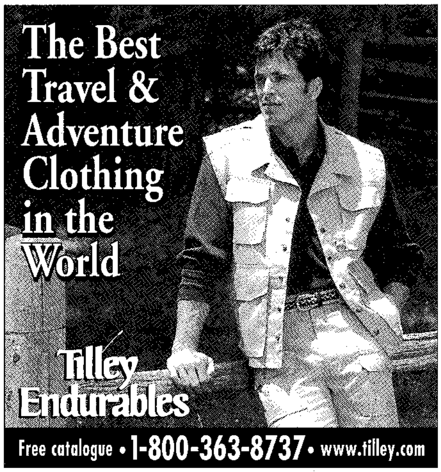

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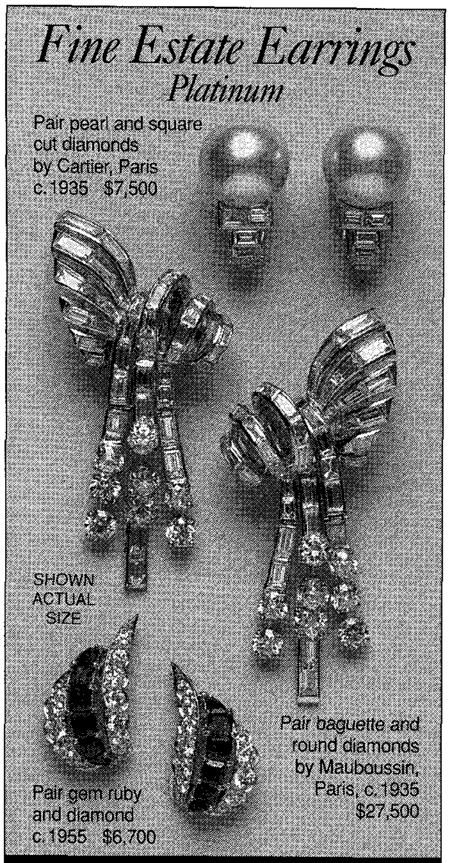

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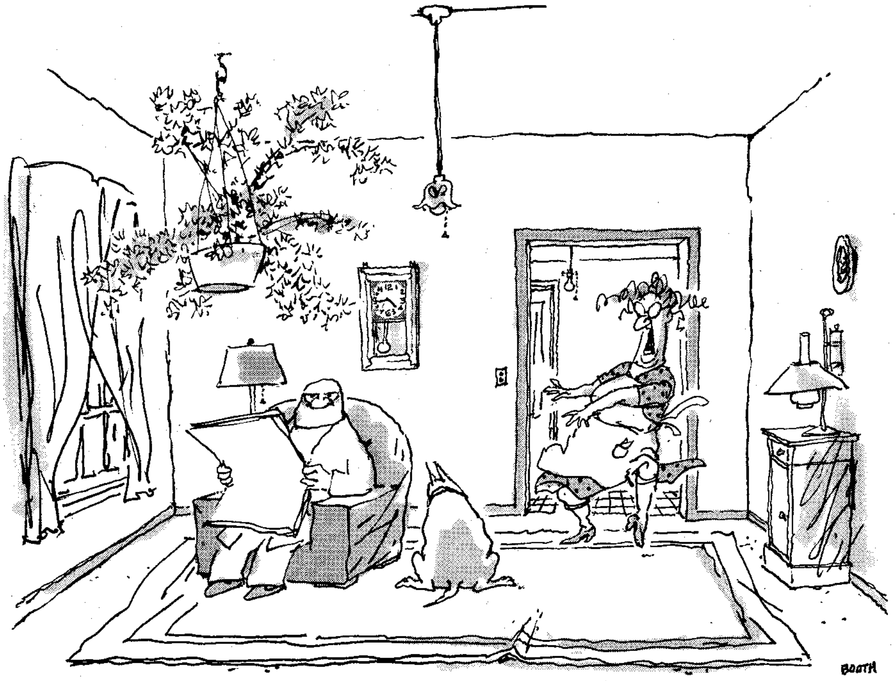


"The planet is all wobbly this morning."

• •

called. "I'd remembered the funniness and the outrageousness, but when we started working on the film the reflective side came back," he told me. He cited a scene in the North Star Coffee Lounge, in which Thompson's attorney menaces a lone waitress: "This is two guys who have gone beyond the pale, this is unforgivable—that scene, it's ugly. My approach, rather than to throw it out, was to make that scene the low point. Maybe Hunter won't like the fact that we're trying to imbue the thing with some morality—or, at least, make an admission that it isn't all fun and games. But I decided that it wasn't just a romp."

In the course of shooting the film, which stars Johnny Depp as Thompson, Gilliam kept his distance from the author. He gave Thompson a cameo appearance in the film, which required him to come to the set for a day. "He would stand around the edge throwing food at me and shouting and being a disruptive influence," Gilliam recalled. "I'm frightened of him seeing the film, because I don't want to disappoint him. Yet you don't want to be hampered by that responsibility, so my attitude was 'Fuck it, keep him away, I hate him, I hate the bastard, don't want him near this thing, I'm going to fuck up his book if he comes near this thing.' And that was my approach."

Shortly before Gilliam left London for the Python reunion, however, he received a fax from Thompson suggesting that the two of them take advantage of Gilliam's visit to Aspen to get together for what Thompson called "some shitting on the public chest." Gilliam arranged to have supper with the writer, and on the night before the Python show we drove through the snow to Thompson's house in nearby Woody Creek.

Despite Thompson's reputation as a host who sometimes regards the arrival of company as an opportunity to loose a few bullets in the yard, the evening passed peaceably. Thompson and Gilliam sat on stools at a kitchen counter, which had ceased to be a counter and become Thompson's office, supporting his electric typewriter and a fax machine. Also present were a young woman, introduced as Heidi, and a tall, amiable-looking man called Ed, who occasionally warmed himself a cup of coffee in the microwave. A TV set was on, tuned to a basketball game with the sound off; plates of cheese, shrimps, and dips were dotted about the room; Heidi served beef sandwiches and soup. All in all, an air of homely coziness prevailed.

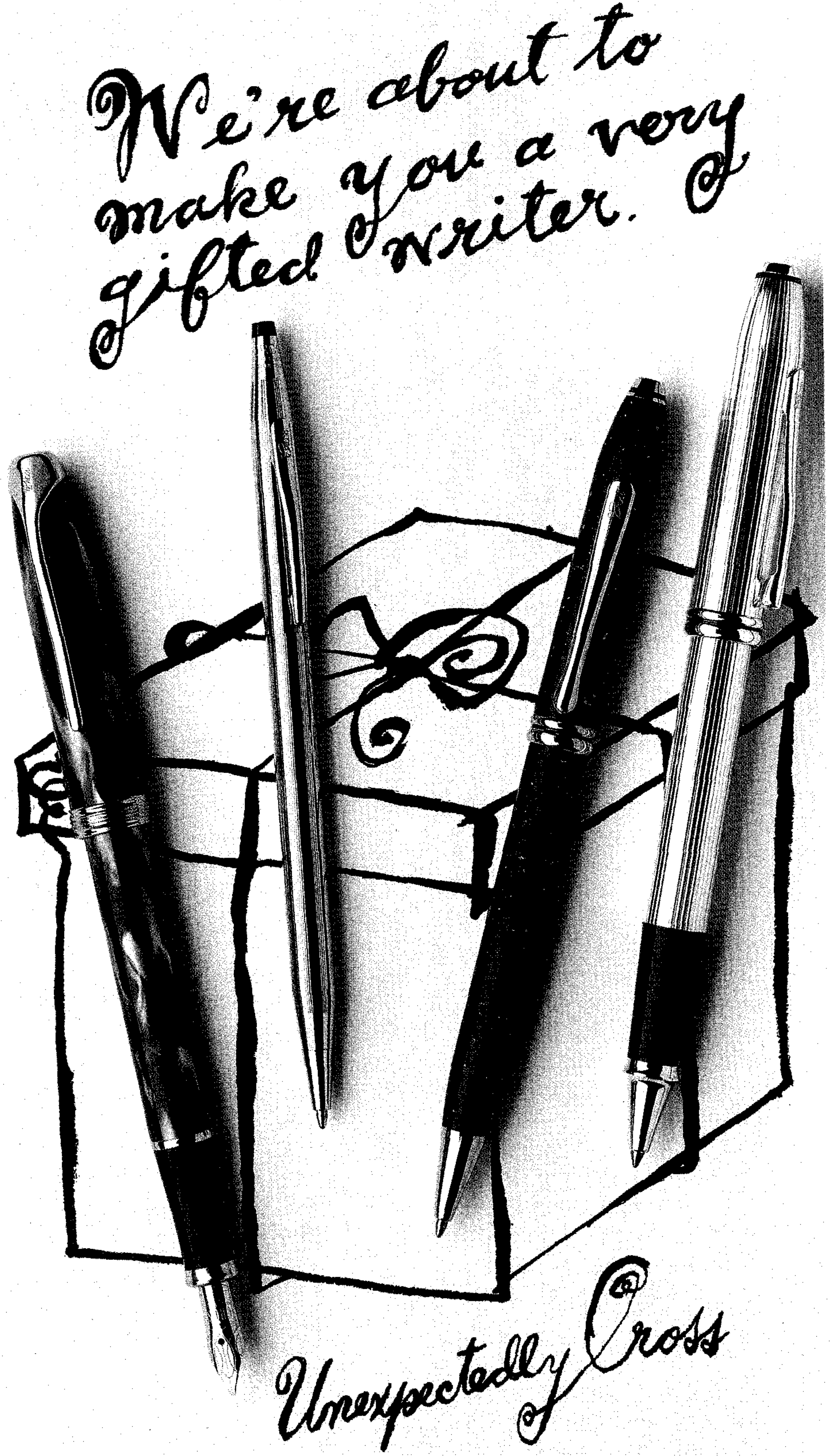
After dinner, Thompson switched off the basketball game to show us a video he'd made of his first meeting with Alex Cox and Tod Davies. The video started out cheerfully enough, with the camera following Thompson as he drove to the foot of his driveway, where he planted an inflatable sex toy in the snow as a beacon for his guests. But after Cox and Davies arrived things heated up over Cox's desire to use animation in the film—a suggestion that Thompson read as an attempt to turn what he called "the best fucking thing I ever wrote" into a cartoon.

When the video ended, Gilliam turned on some heat of his own by bringing up the subject of his fight with the Writers Guild. Thompson seemed keen to write some letters and articles on Gilliam's behalf. "Neither one of us is going to be known for following the rules," Thompson said.

"And I don't think we should start now," Gilliam replied.

EARLIER this month, a few weeks before the scheduled opening of "Fear and Loathing," the Writers Guild revised its position on the film's screenplay credits by agreeing to credit all four writers on the project, listing Gilliam and Tony Grisoni ahead of Davies and Cox. I called Gilliam to congratulate him on his victory and found him—not surprisingly—in a less than celebratory mood. "So we end up sharing credit," he said gloomily. "It's a compromise, a totally political decision. The flag doesn't stand as high on the hill as I'd hoped."

Rallying slightly, Gilliam read to me a fax he'd received from Thompson, who had just seen the film at a screening in Aspen. To Gilliam's delight, Thompson had written to say that he thought the film might be "a masterpiece"; that it was, in any case, "an eerie trumpet call over a lost battlefield." All of this seemed to have bolstered Gilliam's stance against the Writers Guild. He was, he went on to say, planning to burn his membership card in public—indeed, he had hoped to do so a few nights earlier, at a publishing party in New York, but, as he explained, "I couldn't find the fucking card." He added that he was hoping it would turn up before his appearance, in a few days' time, at a bookstore event in the city. "If I can't find it, I'll wear a bra and burn that," he said grimly. "*Something* has got to burn." ♦



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LETTER FROM JERUSALEM

THE OUTSIDER

Can Benjamin Netanyahu overcome the complexity of his own family history and make peace with the Palestinians?

BY DAVID REMNICK

IF Paris is the City of Light, Jerusalem is the City of Opinion. Here it rains opinions. The desert blooms on the moisture of harangue. The rarest phrase in the fifty-year-long history of Israel is "No comment," and certainly no one has ever uttered the following sentence: "I have no comment on Bibi."

Left or right, everyone refers to the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, by his childhood nickname, though familiarity in his case has not bred affection. The strangest thing about Netanyahu is that although he commands support—his stalling tactics on the peace process have won him a center-right majority—he commands little respect. One afternoon, I went to see David Bar-Illan, a former concert pianist, who is among Netanyahu's closest aides and very few friends. On matters of policy, Bar-Illan is a spinmeister extraordinaire, the fellow who happily goes before the camera crews to defend the latest action of the Prime Minister. And yet when we were talking about Bibi's attempts to win over the ultra-Orthodox vote despite his own ultra-secular habits, even his admission of adultery, Bar-Illan rolled his eyes and spoke on the record in a way no Washington equivalent ever would.

"Finessing his being secular was nothing compared to other things, like adultery," Bar-Illan said. "One thing is to have an affair with a shiksa—but a married woman! With a shiksa, even the rebbes do it. But a married woman! Now Bibi'll go to synagogue on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, maybe he's gone to the Western Wall, or he'll say the phrase 'With God's help.' But he's not fooling anyone."

The rhetoric of Israeli democracy has always been noisier than the American brand, but talk about Netanyahu is unhinged. One of the first things I did on arriving in Jerusalem was to call Yitzhak Shamir, the previous Likud Prime Minister. Shamir picked up his phone on the first ring, as if he'd been waiting for the call all week. "Bibi?" Shamir said in his exhausted Old World accent. "He is not a very trustworthy man."

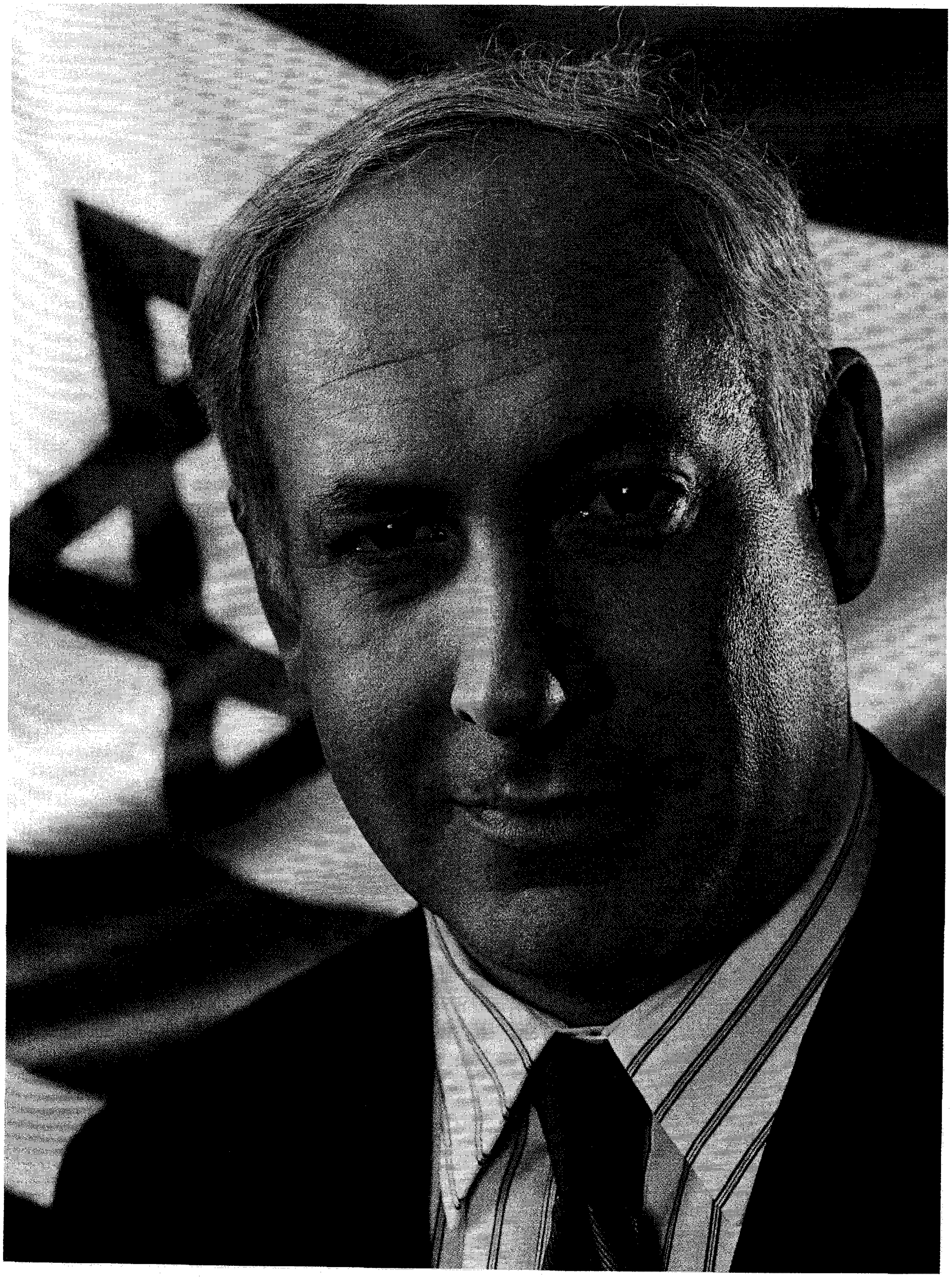
There was a long pause at the other end of the line, as if Shamir felt he had said quite enough to cover the subject. In his view, after all, Bibi concedes *too much* to the Arabs and has diluted the Likud Party. "He's too egotistical. I personally have no contact with him," Shamir went on. "He's a man who is not very popular. He's a talented, successful man. He made it at a young age. He had many advantages. But people don't like him. I wouldn't say he is admired. I don't believe he believes in anything. He has a huge ego. People don't like such people. I don't like him."

And so on. After Shamir had unburdened himself, I called Shimon Peres. Running on a platform of moving quickly on the Oslo peace accords with the Palestinians, Peres lost the 1996 election to Netanyahu, who captured the support not merely of the hard right but also of many Israelis who thought Yitzhak Rabin and Peres had gone too far, too fast. Peres also picked up on the first ring. He was leaving for China in five minutes, he said, but he managed to take ten to tear a hole in his successor. "We've lost so much, and for nothing," Peres said wearily. "Netanyahu's only consideration is his own coalition. He's always worried about losing power—that is always his first priority. In the meantime, we've lost the trust we built up, we've lost the Arab world, we've lost the respect we won throughout the rest of the world. All this makes it appear that we are a bizarre nation. To achieve peace and not follow through is bizarre."

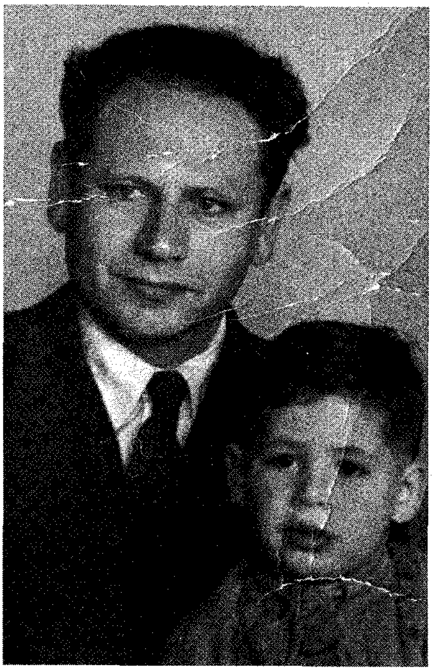
Netanyahu, who is forty-eight, is the first Israeli Prime Minister to have been born after the founding of the state. As a result, perhaps, many Israelis sense in him a distinct lack of gravitas. He often strikes people as a younger man trying to make an impression, and only suffering for it. When I went to interview Netanyahu, in his office, he began the session by lighting up a big cigar, a Davidoff. You knew it was a Davidoff because he left on the ring. Nor did he offer one to his guest: Bad manners? Low supplies? He then proceeded to fill the room with so much smoke that his young press aide, a friendly fellow from Dubuque named Michael Stoltz, reacted as if he'd been trapped in a garage with the car running. Stoltz could have died a slow death, I thought, and Netanyahu would not have stopped his pompous puffing.

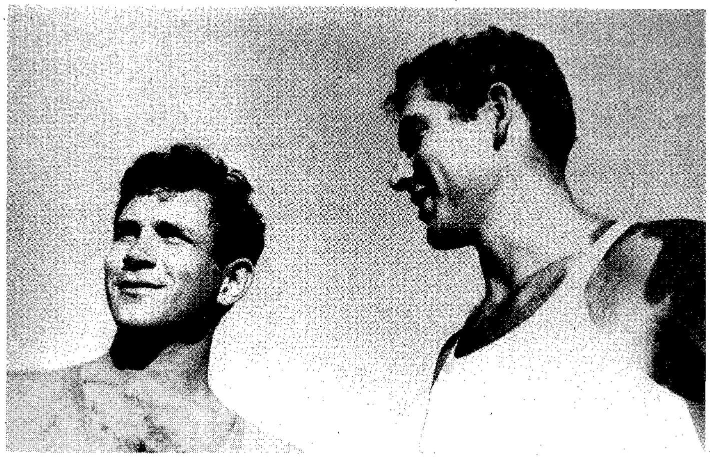
The riddle of Netanyahu is that so many Israelis find him personally insufferable, and yet if there were an election tomorrow he would almost certainly defeat the Labor standard-bearer, his old military commander and role model, Ehud Barak. The Orthodox know all about Bibi's secular indiscretions—the pandering, the philandering. The far-right nationalists cannot yet decide whether he wants to kill the Oslo peace process (as they would like) or not. Both the Russian émigrés and the Sephardim know that he is not one of them. Nevertheless, these outsider constituencies believe that Bibi is better for their interests than the Ashkenazic élites of the Labor Party.

The left, of course, cannot bear Netanyahu. In their view, Bibi has "killed the peace," eradicated the historical chance symbolized by the 1993 and 1995 Oslo accords with the Palestinians. Bibi's enemies see him as an incompetent, unimaginative, and cynical politician with a singular gift for staying in office. "Netanyahu knows very well what he wants," Uri Savir, who had been Rabin's chief negotiator in Oslo, told



The Prime Minister photographed by Arnold Newman in the Knesset in April, 1998. "The real Middle East is not this lovely palette of lovely colors," Netanyahu says. "There is a battle on for the soul of this Islamic Arab civilization."





This page, clockwise from far left: The future Prime Minister and his father; Bibi, left, with his brother Jonathan, who was killed in the 1976 raid at Entebbe; Netanyahu's parents, Benzion and Cela. Opposite page: Bibi and his wife, Sara. Their shaky marriage has been a source of amusement for Israeli newspapers.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: IPPA; SABA; ISRANET

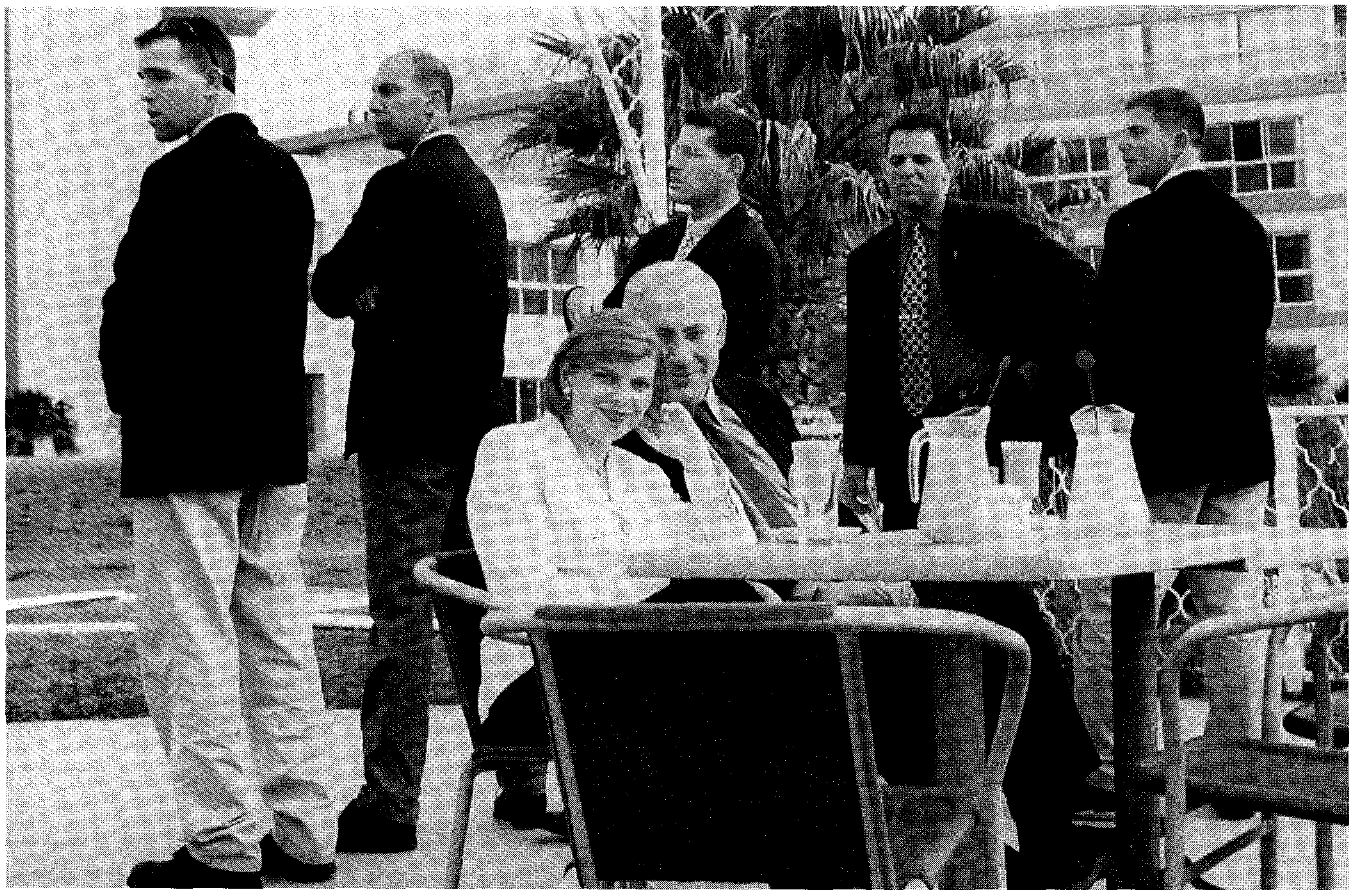
me, "and the main thing is to steer Israel in the direction of a mutual-deterrence policy, because he does not really believe in real peace. He does not believe in a new quality of relations. He also sees everything through the eyes of a political animal and he wants to be reëlected. Everything he does is to play to his right-wing constituency. To appeal to them, he uses the buzzwords that appeal to their ghetto mentality."

There are still many on the left who blame Netanyahu for helping to whip up an atmosphere of hatred that led to the Rabin assassination. Nevertheless, Bar-Illan insists that one day soon all Israelis will end up marvelling at Netanyahu's guile and ideological agility. "Bibi wants to out-Begin Begin," Bar-Illan told me, meaning that he will do something even more shocking than Menachem Begin did when he signed the Camp David accords, in 1978, promising to give the Sinai back to Egypt and bringing about peace between Israel and its most powerful neighbor.

Israel is celebrating its fiftieth year as a state. It is amazing to realize that Zionism has outlasted the two great threats of the twentieth century—Fascism and Communism—and yet the celebration is halfhearted. No small part of this is the sense that the country's leadership is thoroughly uninspired. Almost universally, left and right, Netanyahu is seen as a slippery pol—and not particularly adept at that. During the 1996 campaign, Bibi promised the Orthodox that he, the most secular of men, would be the avatar of the Jewish state. He went to see the spiritual leader of the Sephardim, Rabbi Yitzhak Kaduri, and whispered in the rabbi's ear, "Leftists have forgotten what it is to be Jewish. They think they will put security in the hands of the Arabs—that Arabs will look out for us." Israeli Radio's microphone picked up these remarks.

During his two years in office, Netanyahu has become known for a series of flubs and fast ones. After winning the Likud nomination largely through a new, open electoral process, he supported the repeal of that process. He courted scandal by nominating an attorney general whose main qualification was a tight connection to Shas, the Sephardic party. He defied his own intelligence chief and ordered the assassination of a Hamas leader, Khaled Meshal, in the Jordanian capital of Amman; when the plot to poison Meshal failed miserably (more Inspector Clouseau than 007) and became public, King Hussein was infuriated, and Israelis were bewildered. As Foreign Minister, David Levy said that he had a commitment from Netanyahu on social spending in Sephardic towns, and then resigned when Netanyahu reneged. The right wing remain furious about the redeployment of Israeli forces from the city of Hebron, in the West Bank.

Netanyahu's circle feels persecuted by the press. His defenders point out, for example, that he has not turned out to be militarily aggressive or ideologically unbending. Again and again, they mentioned "one of the few exceptions"—a long article by Ari Shavit published last December in the liberal daily *Ha'aretz*, headlined "THE YEAR OF HATING BIBI." Shavit is a liberal intellectual who wrote that his own circle has been unduly vicious about Netanyahu. When I began reporting this story, Netanyahu's own father gruffly told me that I would invariably quote only his son's enemies, "the left-wingers." I invited him to give



ZIV KOREN/SYGMA

me a list of people I should call, and he did. Naturally, some on the list were ardent supporters, but others, while they said they supported Netanyahu's policies, admitted that they could barely stand the man.

One such was Yoash Tsiddon-Chatto, a reserve Air Force colonel and former Knesset member on the right, who went with Bibi to the Madrid peace talks in 1991. "Something about Bibi's personality creates an anti-rapprochement," Tsiddon-Chatto said. "I didn't ever think he would dodge and manipulate and weave and dodge the way he has as Prime Minister. I doubt if his father is so happy with the way his son has carried out his policies."

THE father. Everywhere I went in Jerusalem, when I asked about Netanyahu the same answer came back: "To understand Bibi, you have to understand the father." But while the Israeli press regularly describes Benzion Netanyahu as deeply conservative in his views and harsh in character, he is nearly a legend, a kind of secret. Benzion does not exactly hide from the world—he is a controversial scholar who has published a cascade of extraordinary books and papers on the Jews of fifteenth-century Spain—but he studiously avoids journalists. Like Bibi, Benzion Netanyahu and his wife, Cela, both regard the Israeli press, which is almost uniformly pro-Labor, with unconcealed contempt. "Bolshevik" is the term they use. They are not a great deal fonder of the American press. The *Times'* coverage of Israel, Benzion told me, "often seems to me unbalanced and slanted toward the leftist side of Israel's public opinion." I was able to spend time with Benzion mainly because we share a book editor, a friend.

When the nation of Israel was founded, Benzion Netanyahu was on the fringe of its political life. Now he is its patriarch. His eldest son, Jonathan—Yoni—is a martyr of the Israeli Defense Forces, whose name is known to every Israeli schoolchild; the middle son, Benjamin, is the leader of the Likud Party and Prime Minister; and the youngest son, Iddo, is both a novelist and (someone had to be) a radiologist.

Benzion, who is eighty-eight, is possessed of a clear mind, good health, and a forbidding personality. A cross word from him scatters the sparrows from the trees. After his son the Prime Minister makes a speech, Benzion sometimes calls to correct a grammatical mistake. "Bibi's Hebrew has gotten far better in recent years," he allows. Benzion is a secular man, and yet his judgments of Israel and history and much else are often so dark, so unforgiving, that he sometimes sounds like the harshest of Old Testament prophets. His views on everything from modern America to the ideological weaknesses and failings of various Israeli politicians, past and present, are often despairing.

Benzion's range of disapproval is breathtaking. Fifty years ago, at the time of Israel's birth, his politics were already on the edge, the outer feathers, of the right wing. As a young man, he was an aide to Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the leader of the hard-line Revisionist movement. Among the early Zionists, the Revisionists were the underground fighters who argued that the Laborites, led by Ben-Gurion, were giving up too easily on territory that is now well beyond Israel. Benzion was part of a movement that saw Israel as laying claim to an area encompassing much of present-day Jordan. The pro-Jabotinsky hymn at the time went, "The Jordan has two banks: this one is ours, the other one, too." His vision, perhaps, is an anachronism and yet it is the vision that the current Prime Minister of Israel was raised on. Benzion looms above his son no less than Joseph Kennedy loomed above his clan, and his views are at the root of Bibi's sense of a menacing world.

When you meet Benzion, he does not seem so forbidding: he has little white tufts of hair and weary, narrow eyes, the eyes of a Chinese scholar. On the day Bibi was sworn in as Prime Minister, at the Knesset, in 1996, Benzion sat in the audience. Ari Shavit, of *Ha'aretz*, remembers seeing the old man and noticing that he betrayed no outward signs of pride or joy. "I was watching it on TV, and thought, My God, to be the son of this man, even if you become Prime Minister you can never satisfy him. This is really the key," Shavit said. "There is this person who pushes himself to the end, demanding the impossible, and even achieving it. It's like a constant internal tyranny. You can never stop. There is no celebration."

To say Benzion has no faith in a peace accord with the Palestinians or with any Arab nation is to state the obvious. Such treaties, to him, are the stuff of fools and naïfs. "Jewish history is in large measure a history of holocausts," Benzion told me, "carried out by anti-Semitic leaders and factions that managed to take over whole countries or regions in times of anarchy, civil war, or rebellion. In the areas that fell under their control, all Jewish communities were wiped out. Hitler differed from them primarily in having become the sole, undisputed ruler of his country and in controlling a much larger area, which allowed him to murder many more Jews."

To a considerable degree, Bibi Netanyahu's internal struggle as Prime Minister is a struggle between an inherited ideology and the tug of political contingencies. His dilemma is always to what degree he can, or should, remain true to the ideals, the stubbornness, of his father. He may not always act on his father's imperatives, but he believes strongly in his father's rightness; both men share a keen sense of insular self-confidence, of being right when all others around them are innocent, bogus, mistaken. When I met with Bibi at his office, he fondly recalled to me how, in 1956, his father went to Ben-Gurion and told him that the Israelis, having just captured the Sinai, had to devise a strategy to keep it. Ben-Gurion had said that he would keep it for a thousand years. Why was Benzion worried about losing it?

"Because the U.S. will force you to," Benzion told him.

"Of course, he was right, unfortunately," Bibi said. "That was the first and last time an Israeli Prime Minister succumbed to an American diktat." It is not hard to imagine this anecdote playing in the Prime Minister's head when American diplomats like Dennis Ross and Madeleine Albright sit with him in negotiations.

Both the Israeli left and the White House would argue that Bibi has slowed down the peace process so much that the Palestinians and such Arab states as Jordan and Egypt have lost hope. In recent weeks, Clinton Administration officials have urged Netanyahu to agree to withdraw from a full thirteen per cent of the West Bank in exchange for Palestinian guarantees on terrorism. Netanyahu has balked at that figure, though he has indicated a willingness to pull back from nine per cent of the disputed territory (perhaps even eleven per cent). The point, he insisted late last week, at talks in Washington with Ross and Albright, was that any accord must preserve what he called a "territorial buffer" against Palestinian terrorism. Netanyahu, to be sure, continued to face intense pressure at home: Palestinians demonstrated against *al nakba*—"the catastrophe"—of the founding of Israel; riots broke out, and several Palestinians were killed by Israeli troops. And it is far from certain that Netanyahu's right-wing Cabinet, especially the influential Infrastructure Minister, Ariel Sharon, would agree to a settlement resembling the American plan.

Netanyahu's over-all argument is that the left's dream of a New Middle East, of peaceful relations and open markets in a region of Arab dictatorships, is fantasy. "The real Middle East is not this lovely palette of lovely colors," he said. "There are some very dark streaks there. More than streaks—large swaths of fundamentalism and dictatorial regimes. There is a battle on for the soul of this Islamic Arab civilization. I don't write them off. I think we can influence it, but first of all not in a major way and, in any case, in a way different from the way the left thinks. They think that if we make more concessions we'll defuse the time bomb, the mechanism that keeps this going. But this is much bigger than the battle with Zionism. It's a battle with modernity."

For the extreme right wing, however, Bibi has not always been firm enough with the Arabs. The Prime Minister's decision last year to cede authority over Hebron to the Palestinian Authority was, in their eyes, a betrayal of the 1996 campaign, and of Revisionist principles. Bibi's brother-in-law, a settler named Chagi Ben-Artzi, told me, "Bibi grew up in a family in which the principle of keeping the land, the entire land, in Jewish hands was a holy principle.... I've heard Bibi's father be very critical about the Hebron agreement. He said it is absolutely not justified. He didn't see any good reason to give Arafat more land before he carried out one single commitment included in the Oslo accords." Benzion denied that he had argued with his son about Hebron or Oslo in general; when Ben-Artzi made public his own opposition to his brother-in-law's policy, their relations soured.

Reflecting on his son and Oslo, Benzion later said, "What I can gather from the deeds and the statements of the Prime Minister is that he is struggling to obtain, within the limits of the Oslo agreement, and through the implementation of the commitments on the part of both sides, arrangements that are vital for the security of Israel and will minimize the outbreaks of large-scale terrorism and wars."

Bibi, for his part, dismisses all talk of paternal influence as "psychobabble." His friends and colleagues who have known him for decades do not. Natan Sharansky, one of Netanyahu's current ministers and closest advisers, told me, "Look, there's no doubt that the father is crucial to Bibi, especially historically, in Jewish history and world history. In his day-to-day activities, it helps Bibi to somehow stay in focus. He gets caught up in the daily struggles, but he always has this view of history in mind."

What will Bibi do, then, in the coming months and years? Will he listen to the call of history and try to come to an agreement with the Palestinians? Or will he listen to the right-wing constituencies that will keep him in office? "I think Bibi is divided and sometimes paralyzed by the difference between his heart and his head," said David Makovsky, who covers diplomacy for *Ha'aretz*. "His visceral reactions are ideological, like his father's, but intellectually he's come to see that his visceral reactions are not always correct. The result is paralysis. Motion without movement in the peace process."

BENZION and Cela Netanyahu reared their sons in a spacious house, on Haportzim Street, in the Old Katamon district of West Jerusalem. They still live there. There was little wealth in Jerusalem in those days, and the Netanyahus felt themselves quite nearly rich. Their car was American—a Henry J—and they had one of the few telephones in the neighborhood. Benzion edited the enormously popular Encyclopedia Hebraica. "And for that," he told me, "I got the highest salary in Jerusalem!" The house is now worth around a million dollars.

Benzion Netanyahu is known in scholarly circles around the world for his book "The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain." In medieval studies, his thesis is considered revolutionary. The Jews were oppressed in Spain even after they had become converts to Christianity. Netanyahu challenged the traditional view that the Spaniards persecuted the *conversos* because many of them continued to practice their original faith in secret. Netanyahu's work contends that the long-held notion of the *conversos* as "secret Jews" is a romantic delusion. He argues that in fact only a very few of the New Christians practiced Judaism, and that the Inquisition was actually a historical moment in which the Christian monarchs developed a theory of racial hatred designed to uproot and demolish a perceived threat to their social and political order. Netanyahu writes that after two massive waves of conversion, in 1391 and in 1412, these New Christians began to assume powerful positions in politics and the Church. Since the Spaniards could no longer attack the *conversos* on the basis of religious faith, they devised tracts describing the *Jewish people* as an inherently polluted, contaminated race. For the first time, Netanyahu writes, a society devised a racial theory of Jewish inferiority which laid the foundation for the Inquisition in Spain just as surely as the Nuremberg laws were the precursor to the Final Solution. After fourteen hundred pages, one is led to the darkest conclusion possible: that even if Jews go as far as to convert, and even if that conversion is thorough and official, it will not matter; the resentment of the Jews as a people will persist, even to the point of forced exile and mass murder.

I called on the Netanyahus on a fine spring morning. Cela Netanyahu let me in and then quickly went off to get her husband. Cela studied law at Gray's Inn, in London, but never practiced. Instead, she raised her three sons and, above all, was her husband's wife. She guarded him against distraction and travelled with him in the United States when there were no academic posts available in Israel. In all, Benzion and Cela lived in America for more than twenty years—first from 1940 to 1948, to work for the Zionist movement, and then from 1963 to 1977, to teach at various colleges and work on his books.

While I was waiting for Benzion, I walked over to the dining room. When the boys were growing up, the dining room was their father's study, the nexus of the house. "When you went over there, you made sure not to disturb the old man," one family friend said. "That was the inner sanctum." Now a bust of Yoni dominates the room. Yoni was the only Israeli soldier killed during the commando raid on the airport in Entebbe, Uganda, in 1976.

Over the years, the Netanyahus have cultivated a sense of uniqueness about their family. "Their perception of themselves is as a major family in the history of Israel," one of Bibi's friends said. "The father is the great scholar and wise man. The eldest son, Yoni, is the martyred soldier. The middle son is the Prime Minister and savior of Israel. The youngest, Iddo, is the writer, who also practices medicine. Bibi's said that he thinks Iddo is 'Israel's new Hemingway.' No matter that Israel has *truly* great writers—A. B. Yehoshua, Amos Oz,

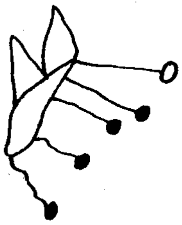
"Have ye seen a whale that matches this swatch?"

Aharon Appelfeld, Meir Shalev. That's the way they think."

Finally, Benzion came in and sat down in an armchair. For a while he talked about his father, Nathan Mileikowsky, a rabbi who was born in Lithuania and helped run the famous Krinsky *Gymnasium*, in Warsaw. As a leading Zionist orator, Nathan toured Europe and America making speeches in support of a Jewish state. When he brought his family to Palestine, in 1920, they came ashore in a small boat in Tel Aviv and changed their name to Netanyahu—God-Given.

Time and again in conversation, Benzion talked about the persistent spectre of the left in Israel. He said much of the press in Israel is worse than *Pravda*, because in the old Soviet Union at least readers *understood* that their press was frequently lying. This, in modified language, is a familiar theme in Bibi's conversation.

Benzion studied medieval history at Hebrew University. Later, he was co-editor of a literary monthly, *Beitar*, and then of the Revisionists' daily newspaper *Ha-Yarden*. His contemporaries remember him as being extraordinarily intelligent and charming and, at the same time, arrogant and nearly seething with resentments and contempt. Even now, he radiates the same qualities, at once spinning a fascinating tale of old Jerusalem for his visitor and then talking with acid condescension (at best) about various constituencies and politicians in Israel. In his view, Arab fundamentalism and Asian nuclear power are the order of the future. He is a man of numerous and ferocious opinions, but is very wary of publicizing them—not least, perhaps, for fear of embarrassing his son.



It's hard to replicate the old man in print. For one thing, he is both fierce and irresistibly alive; for another, he insisted that our talks were "friendly chats," not a formal interview. But what comes through, so often, is a man who resents what he sees as the folly of others.

"There was always a strong myth of persecution in that family, always a grievance," I was told by Shalom Rosenfeld, a contemporary in the Revisionist movement who was later the editor of the leading newspaper *Ma'ariv*.

"There is a feeling of rejection by the academic establishment, which was dominated by the left and denied Benzion a decent job, and, as a result, the Netanyahus were forced to emigrate, which was very painful," Chagi Ben-Artzi, Bibi's brother-in-law, said. "Part of the background of the determination of Bibi to change Israel, to make it a more democratic society, to push the process of privatization, stems from that old resentment, because the left used the economic structure of the country to dominate Israel ideologically—anyone who was not politically correct was denied economic chances. That resentment is still there. It's not something for them that belongs to the past."

Ben-Artzi's facts are only partly correct. It's true that Benzion did not get a job at Hebrew University, but the university was tiny in those days, and there were hardly any positions available to anyone. For work, and for superior libraries, Benzion accepted jobs at Dropsie College, in Philadelphia, and at Cornell, in Ithaca, New York.

The family's sense of outsiderness has more to do with real politics than with academic politics. Some of Jabotinsky's followers, including Begin and Shamir, took to the underground, carrying out military missions against the British and the Arabs. Netanyahu was among the ideologues, the campaigners. In early 1940, he went to the United States to help Jabotinsky lobby American politicians on behalf of the Zionist idea. Jabotinsky died later that year, but Benzion stayed on for eight years, as director of the New Zionist Organization, meeting with such influential figures as General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and key members of Congress. "When we came with Jabotinsky, people laughed at us at first," Benzion said. "No Jew was dreaming of a Jewish state. 'Who will create it?' they said. 'The English will create it? The Arabs are against it!' Even Chaim Weizmann declared that it was impossible, that it was no more possible to create a Jewish state in Israel than it was in Manhattan."

When Benzion and his family returned to the new state in 1948, he took up the Encyclopedia and moved out of politics. Bibi's eventual rivals for the Likud leadership—the Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert, the former Finance Minister Dan Meridor, and Ze'ev (Benny) Begin—all come from right-wing political legacies. They are known as Likud "princes." Bibi was never grouped with the princes, because his father had made his life, finally, in academe. "I don't think my father would ever have been in politics," the Prime Minister told me. "He's not temperamentally suited."

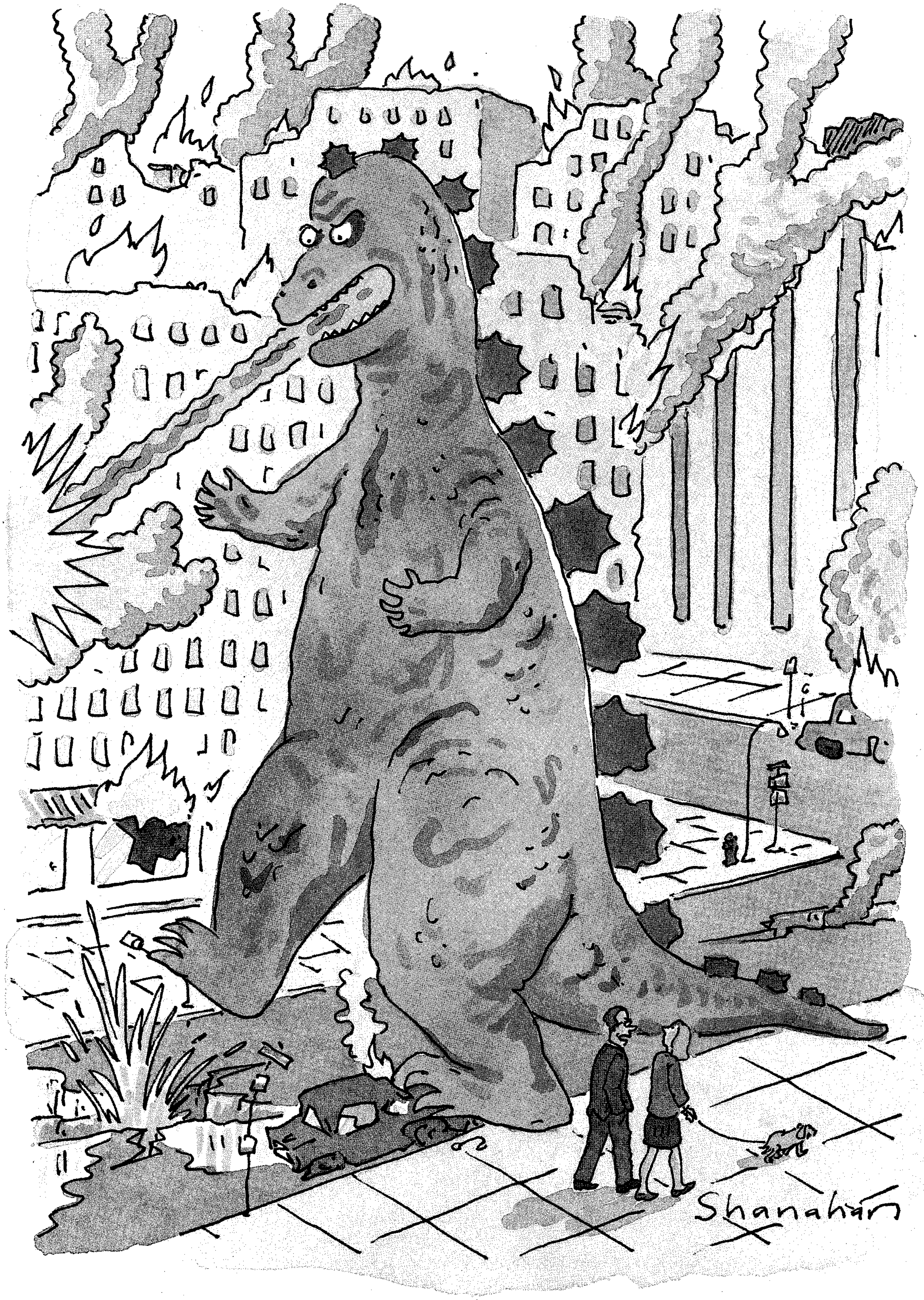
But when I asked Bibi if he considered himself an outsider in Israel and in Israeli politics he did not deny it.

"You're damn right—outsider!" he said. "You don't have to psychobabble it!" Netanyahu could hardly have grown up with more privilege, and yet he is a Prime Minister elected by a coalition of outsider groups. His votes came from the Sephardim, the Orthodox, the settlers, the Russians—all groups who see themselves as excluded from the liberal Ashkenazic establishment. Like Ronald Reagan, Netanyahu successfully governs as an outsider: even as he wields power, he keeps complaining to his constituencies about the lopsidedly liberal press, the fearsome lefties in academe, all the while implying that *they* are the establishment, and that *they* hate you. It is a familiar, and familial, theme.

"I think the father is already within him—it's built in," one of Bibi's friends told me. "The father always talked about They. *They* don't understand a thing. *They* are naïve. *They* are fools. Always *they*, them."

ISRAELI political debate is almost invariably, at root, a clash of historical narratives. No argument or incident is too ancient for consideration. The evidence for this rushes at you every day. One afternoon, while I was drinking a cup of coffee at a café in the Muslim quarter of the Old City and reading the papers, I came across a letter to the editor in the Jerusalem *Post* from David Wilder, a spokesman for the Jewish community in Hebron, who was responding to an article by a well-known figure in Palestinian politics, Daoud Kuttab:

> Sir,—Daoud Kuttab viciously attacked the Jewish community of Hebron in his article "At the boiling point" (March 1). Herewith is our reply to several of Kuttab's accusations: Kuttab refers to the "Ibrahimi mosque." This building is known to Jews as the Machpela Cave, the second holiest site to the Jewish people throughout the world. This site has served as a mosque only



"I thought they were cracking down on jaywalking."

"This is a nice restaurant. Turn your cap around."

• •

> since 1267. The building was originally constructed as a site for Jewish worship, built by Herod, king of Judea, 2,000 years ago.

The key phrase here, of course, is "*only* since 1267."

To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the state, Israeli television has been showing a twenty-two-part documentary on Sunday nights called "Tekuma," or "Rebirth." I happened to catch one of the most controversial installments—an overview of the early history of the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank and the rise of Palestinian nationalism and violence. To American eyes, it seemed fairly ordinary: interviews-plus-film-clips fare—the sort of thing you might see on A&E or the Discovery Channel. There was Golda Meir, in both English and Hebrew, denying the existence of the Palestinian people; there was the squalor of the refugee camps in Gaza; and there, too, were the terrorist attacks in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the slaughter of Israeli athletes in Munich, a mother remembering how her two children were killed when a terrorist tossed a grenade into the back seat of her car.

The filmmaker, Ronit Weiss-Berkowitz, said that even before her segment was shown on the air she began receiving death threats. "They call my home," she said, "and say, 'We will burn you,' 'You fucking Arabs,' 'You stinking leftist, we know where you live.' . . . I wanted to show, step by step, the creation of the ideology behind terrorism—which I reject, which I don't identify with, but whose roots I understand. I wanted to show why and how a Palestinian starts thinking of terror as a solution. We Israelis think we have a monopoly on blood, tears, and pain, but, of course, this is not true. We know our side in this story. I wanted to present the other side—loudly."

For the right wing, including the Prime Minister, the documentary series was an attempt by the leftist press to dominate the national narrative, to wallow in the guilt of "original sin"—the Jewish displacement and subjugation of Palestinian Arabs. Yoav Gelber, one of the show's academic advisers, resigned and said that the segment belonged in a series marking "the fiftieth anniversary of the Palestinian Authority."

Bibi despises the men and women who run Israeli television—to him they are part of the leftist claque that has always dominated all cultural and media institutions in Israel—and when I asked him about "Tekuma" he waved in disgust. "It's a joke!" he said. "It's a joke! It's agitprop, it's agitprop, the small segment that I've seen. It's just not the facts. The presentation of the Palestinian side, what I've seen, is skewed beyond belief. It's the facts that I'm dealing with. The facts can have diverse interpretations, but there cannot be diverse facts. That, I think, is important."

In my talks with Benzion, he made it clear that he thought that the Jewish people might never recover from the murder of the European Jews; he also saw intermarriage and assimilation as posing great threats to the survival of the Jews. He feels that even present-day Israel, including the occupied territories, is but a fraction of what was originally promised; and to give up more land to the Arabs is extraordinarily dangerous, especially because a future Palestinian state could ally itself with such countries as Iraq and Iran—Israel's sworn enemies. "There is no doubt that many of the Arabs want to see the State of Israel destroyed," he said, "and they would end Jewish existence in the country if they had the chance to do it. Only the fear of retaliation keeps them back."

That is Benzion in conversation and it is Bibi in his 1993 book, "A Place Among the Nations," which gives the most embattled reading possible to the history of Zionism and the Israeli state. When I talked to Benzion, he protested the idea of familial unanimity, but he did say, "There was no generation gap at all. We didn't agree on everything—this is not a family of robots—but our family has a coherence to it." However, he added later, "I am not involved in any measure or degree in shaping or influencing the policies or activities of the present government of Israel."

In "A Place Among the Nations," Bibi's most sustained historical metaphor for the Israeli security predicament is Czechoslovakia before the Second World War; for him, the West Bank is the Sudetenland, the limited territorial pretext used by Hitler to overrun the entire country. When I asked Netanyahu about the comparison, he allowed that it was imperfect, but still one cannot read that book without sensing the author's parallel between the Germans and Arab aggression. The Czech metaphor is not one he indulges now as Prime Minister, but it has shaped his thinking since he was a young man.

If there was someone who really knew Bibi well, who shared with him the world of the family and a view of the world, it was his older brother, Yoni. In deciding what course to take with the Palestinians or with Syria, he has to cope with the legacy of his brother, a symbol of Israel's conflicts with the Arab world.

Along with their parents, Iddo, Yoni, and Bibi moved to Elkins Park, a Philadelphia suburb, in 1963, and went to a local high school. Each of the sons, in turn, went back to Israel for his Army service while their parents stayed in the United States. Yoni was the first to go, and he stayed in close touch with his brother through hundreds of letters, like this one, which was mailed after Bibi had been in a punch-up:

> In my opinion, there's nothing wrong with a good fistfight; on the contrary, if you're young and you're not seriously hurt, it won't do you real harm. Remember what I told you? He who delivers the first blow, wins.

After the Six-Day War, in which Yoni had been wounded in the arm, he wrote a letter to Bibi that evoked both the spirit of their father's toughness and a determination not to remain in America:

> The recruitment of all these little terrorists only strengthens my consciousness as an Israeli. If they come to fight, we—or at least I in the Diaspora—must certainly do so all the more. My national consciousness is no doubt stronger than that of the Arabs, I'm a much better fighter than they are, and so are all Israeli soldiers.

In another letter to Bibi, Yoni wrote, "You're the only true friend I ever had."

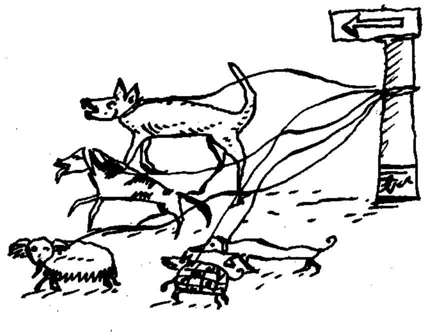
Because the country is so small, Israeli soldiers often go home for weekends and vacations; each of the Netanyahu boys stayed with friends of the family while their parents remained in the States. "Yoni lived like a gypsy, and this was strange in Israel," Yoni's friend the scholar Avishai Margalit said to me. "To be a loner in Israel is unusual, and all three of them were to an extent like this."

Bibi returned to Israel in 1967 and joined the élite reconnaissance unit Sayeret Matkal. In the unit, he was regarded as intelligent and diligent but not especially creative. He distinguished himself at a nighttime raid on the Beirut Airport in 1968 and in the rescue of hostages aboard a hijacked Sabena airliner in 1972. During the Sabena raid, Netanyahu was one of the commandos who went on board dressed as mechanics; he grabbed one of the hijackers, a woman, by the hair and slammed her into a bulkhead, demanding to know where to find the hostages.

Bibi returned to the United States in 1972 to study architecture and business administration at M.I.T. He raced home to his unit for the 1973 Yom Kippur War, but he made a life for himself in America, first as a student, then as a business executive in Boston. He gave right-wing lectures on Israel, lectures that rang very much of Benzion. In 1973, he shortened his name to Ben Nitay. Netanyahu always denied to the Israeli press that he had legally changed his name, and when *Ma'ariv* published the legal documents recording the name change, filed in a court in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, the Prime Minister's spokesman, Shai Bazak, called the story "a malicious effort to contrive a sensational story."

The years in the United States did nothing to push Bibi to the left. He was very much for the war in Vietnam and deeply depressed by the conciliatory turn Israel took under his father's old comrade Begin. When Anwar Sadat came to Jerusalem, Avishai Margalit's sister-in-law threw a party in Cambridge and invited Bibi.

"When he arrived," Margalit recalled, "he was totally grim-faced and said, 'What's the celebration? Now we'll relinquish the Sinai and they'll be on our border and there will be another war.' He was coming for a funeral, not a party."



No event shaped Netanyahu's future more than the death of Yoni, at Entebbe. On July 4, 1976—the American bicentennial—Yoni Netanyahu led a team of commandos to Uganda, where Israelis had been taken hostage by Palestinian and German terrorists. As the commandos stormed the airport building where the hostages were under guard, Yoni was gunned down, either from the control tower or from within the building itself. Bibi was in Boston at the time, and as soon as he heard the news he drove to Ithaca to tell his parents. His mother, Cela, seeing Bibi, ran to the door and, before he could say a word, said, "He's dead, isn't he?"

Many friends and acquaintances of the family told me that Yoni was the son who seemed destined for great things, perhaps first in the military, and later in politics. Had he lived, they say, Yoni might have been a chief of staff or a government minister.

Bibi was devastated. "If it wasn't for Yoni's death, I'm not sure Bibi would have gone into politics," Netanyahu's friend Uzi Beller told me. "He loved the States, especially the economy, the whole idea of a free market. He could easily have slipped into becoming an American businessman and made a lot of money." Bibi could not eat solid food for weeks after the funeral.

"The brother was the one person he really loved. This is crucial and underlies his loneliness," said Ari Shavit, of *Ha'aretz*. "I think that on the other hand they were both in the same position. They were both committed to the father. The father was from turn-of-the-century ideology and politics, though, and they realized they had to swim in a contemporary environment. So on the one hand they had to be loyal to this unique father figure, on the other hand they had to go out into the world and function. Losing Yoni was worse than losing someone you love. Bibi lost the one person who could understand him."

At the same time, Bibi saw Yoni not merely as a personal loss but as a national event, a figure in history. He was determined to make sure this was so. At the shiva, Bibi, his parents, and Iddo accepted the condolence calls of many Israelis. One of Yoni's friends arrived at the house and saw Bibi talking to Chaim Bar-Lev, a former chief of staff, then a Minister of Industry.

The friend recalled, "As soon as Bibi saw me come through the door, he left Bar-Lev, came to me, and, hardly saying hello, said, 'We've been at war for three hundred years with the Arabs and each generation needs a hero. Trompeldor fulfilled his role, and I'll make Yoni the hero of his generation.' " Josef Trompeldor was in the Tsar's Army and lost an arm in the war with the Japanese. After coming to Palestine, he was killed in a skirmish with Arabs in 1920 and became a hero, a legend of renewed Jewish heroism, especially for the right.

Because the Entebbe operation had been so spectacular, it was inevitable that Yoni's name would become a symbol. But, as Bibi had promised at the shiva, the family helped promote this. Bibi and Iddo edited a collection of Yoni's letters; more than sixty thousand copies have been sold in the Hebrew edition alone. Bibi also began a think tank called the Jonathan Institute, for the study of terrorism. To commemorate Yoni's heroism at Entebbe, Iddo wrote a book called "Yoni's Last Battle." One former commando, however, a prominent military man named Muki Betser, who was at Entebbe, has been hostile to the Netanyahu family and was outraged over Iddo's book, which he thought inflated Yoni's role and downplayed the bravery of the rest. "I'm not sure Yoni would have liked what his little brother wrote," Betser told the Israeli press. In the early nineties, when it became clear that Bibi was emerging as a possible candidate for Prime Minister, the press began publishing stories about Yoni—all unproven—implying that he had made crucial mistakes during the Entebbe mission.

Iddo Netanyahu remains Yoni's main champion. Several months each year, he practices in the United States as a radiologist, a job that earns him enough money to live the rest of the year in Jerusalem with his family and write fiction. I met with Iddo at his house, in the Jerusalem hills. Like his father, Iddo was wary of being quoted, but he is clearly pained by the attacks on the Netanyahus.

Recently, Iddo published a novel in Hebrew entitled "Itamar K." It can very easily be read as a thinly veiled political attack—and certainly the Israeli press has done so. The hero is Itamar Koller, a young filmmaker who discovers how hard it is in Israel to have right-wing views and still win respect as an artist and an intellectual. In refusing to embrace left-wing ideology, Itamar is rejected by the Israeli cultural élite. Itamar wants to make a movie, but funding goes instead to a left-wing homosexual, and Itamar is left behind with "untapped potential, with no way of knowing whether or not he could have realized it." The novel features set pieces on two filmmakers who cower before a former terrorist who is now a member of the Palestinian Authority. Itamar meets a writer who is infuriated by the "smiles on the faces of our ministers as they hand Bethlehem, the city where David was born, over to the Arabs." And so, once more, there is this loneliness, this singularity to the family—the Netanyahus versus the cultural hegemony of the left.

While Netanyahu's early family life is the stuff of Biblical, or at least Portnoyan, complexity, his family life in adulthood, along with his relationships beyond the family, has been a feast for the tabloids.

In the late seventies, Netanyahu married the first of his three wives, an Israeli woman named Micky, and they had a daughter, Noa. But in Boston Bibi met a woman named Fleur Cates, and when Micky learned of the affair she left him.

Netanyahu entered public life in 1982, when Moshe Arens made him his No. 2 at the Embassy in Washington. Bibi made a name for himself on American television as the smooth Israeli who was everywhere, defending the Begin government's war in Lebanon. Later, Arens helped place Netanyahu as Israel's man at the United Nations, and there Bibi became an even more public figure with his support for Soviet Jewry and his attacks on Kurt Waldheim. Netanyahu went back to Israel in 1988 to win a seat in the Knesset and to be Arens's deputy at the Foreign Ministry. The marriage to Fleur, which was already troubled, fell apart once they were in Israel.

In 1989, Netanyahu was changing planes at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, and while he was on a moving walkway he spotted an El Al stewardess named Sara Ben-Artzi. "We were going in opposite directions," she once said, in an interview. "He looked at me until he had to turn his head backwards. Then, on the plane, he came to look for me."

Netanyahu married Sara in March, 1991, when she was already several months pregnant. According to reports in the Israeli press, Netanyahu postponed the wedding at least once but was finally brought to heel by Yisrael Meir Lau, then the chief rabbi of Tel Aviv.

The Netanyahus now have two children. It would be folly to guess at the details of their marriage, but it is, by every outward sign, another troubled union. The first of several disasters came

THE WISE

Who are the wise? Those heavy-lidded sages,
Lotus-positioned, meditative, calm
Extinguishers of our banked ancestral rages,
Serene as the Gautama's upturned palm?

Or are they the worldly-wise, the shrewdly knowing
Machiavels of the heart's computer chess,
Anticipating counterplot, bestowing
Strategic love, half nelson, half caress?

Are they, in eternal shelf-life congregated,
The calf-bound canonized authors of Great Books?
The quoted, the belaurelled, the much fêted?
Or we, the spouses of unrivalled cooks?

—Anthony Hecht

in January, 1993, while Netanyahu was in a struggle for the leadership of the Likud Party. Sara received an anonymous phone call telling her that her husband had a "thing" for his image consultant, a married woman named Ruth Bar; what was more, the caller said, there existed a videotape of Bar and Netanyahu in "compromising romantic situations." Netanyahu's reaction was to go on television immediately and admit to his infidelity and, without naming names (everyone knew he meant his rival, David Levy), accuse members of his own party of "Mafia methods." This was "the worst political crime in Israeli history, perhaps in the history of democracy," he told viewers. He added that his only debt—"if I have a debt and I have a debt on this matter"—was to his wife and children.

As it happened, no videotape turned up, and now Netanyahu had to apologize to Levy. For his part, Levy called Netanyahu "Napoleon," "liar," "eel," and refused to speak to him or utter his name until 1996.

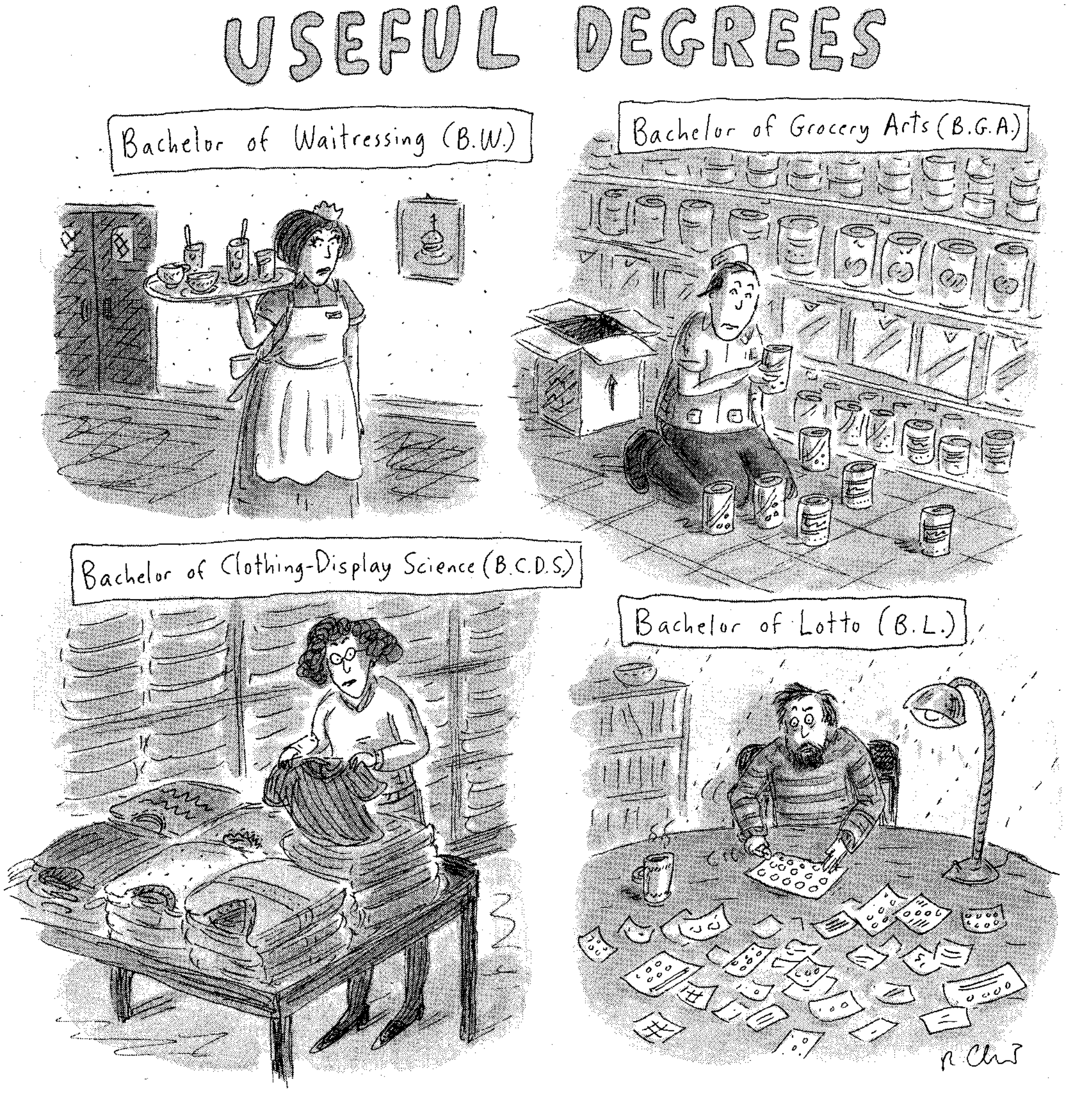
The Israeli press has reported that the Netanyahu marriage is sustained now by a series of guidelines laid out by Sara and family lawyers. Sources close to Netanyahu have said that Bibi felt he could not afford yet another divorce and still claim leadership of a conservative and religious political coalition. Netanyahu deflects the subject with various formulaic phrases of contrition and renewal, but his close aide David Bar-Illan was anything but evasive with me.

"The confession of adultery, the Sara business, this all hurt him more than I would have expected," Bar-Illan said. "For years in Israel no one cared about such things. Moshe Dayan screwed half the women in the Army and even got into trouble over it, but we said we didn't care. Everyone knew all about it and about other politicians and their affairs. But the atmosphere changed. It's the feminist thing, which is almost getting Victorian. When Bibi made his confession, it was not particularly subtle. It was hard to mistake what he meant, that he was accusing people in his own party. But it was a terrible mistake going on television and confessing to infidelity. The crime here is getting caught, and he wasn't caught."

SINCE he came to power, Netanyahu's marriage has remained a target for a hostile press. The tabloids have accused Sara of everything from plagiarizing work in graduate school to being a deranged "clean" freak. Her children's nanny, Tania Shaw, sued the family, accusing Sara of "enslavement" and mistreatment. A long report in the newspaper *Yediot Ahronot* featured such details as Sara's hurling shoes at her servants; in another account, Sara was described as bursting in on high-level government meetings and telling one of the Prime Minister's aides, a general, to get up, "you're sitting in my seat." The over-all impression in the Israeli press is of a dim harridan who has her man by the neck. A member of the Knesset even declared that there should be legislation passed to restrain her.

Bar-Illan is supposedly a master of the press, but when I asked him about the marriage, on the record, with my pen and notebook out for all to see, he rolled his eyes and said, "Look, Sara is not the most stable woman in the world. . . . Now she only appears at the appropriate things, receptions for children, things for the retarded or the disadvantaged. And it works. It's O.K. Finally it's become boring to Israelis. Had she run half naked through the streets, it might have been something else, but it's under control."

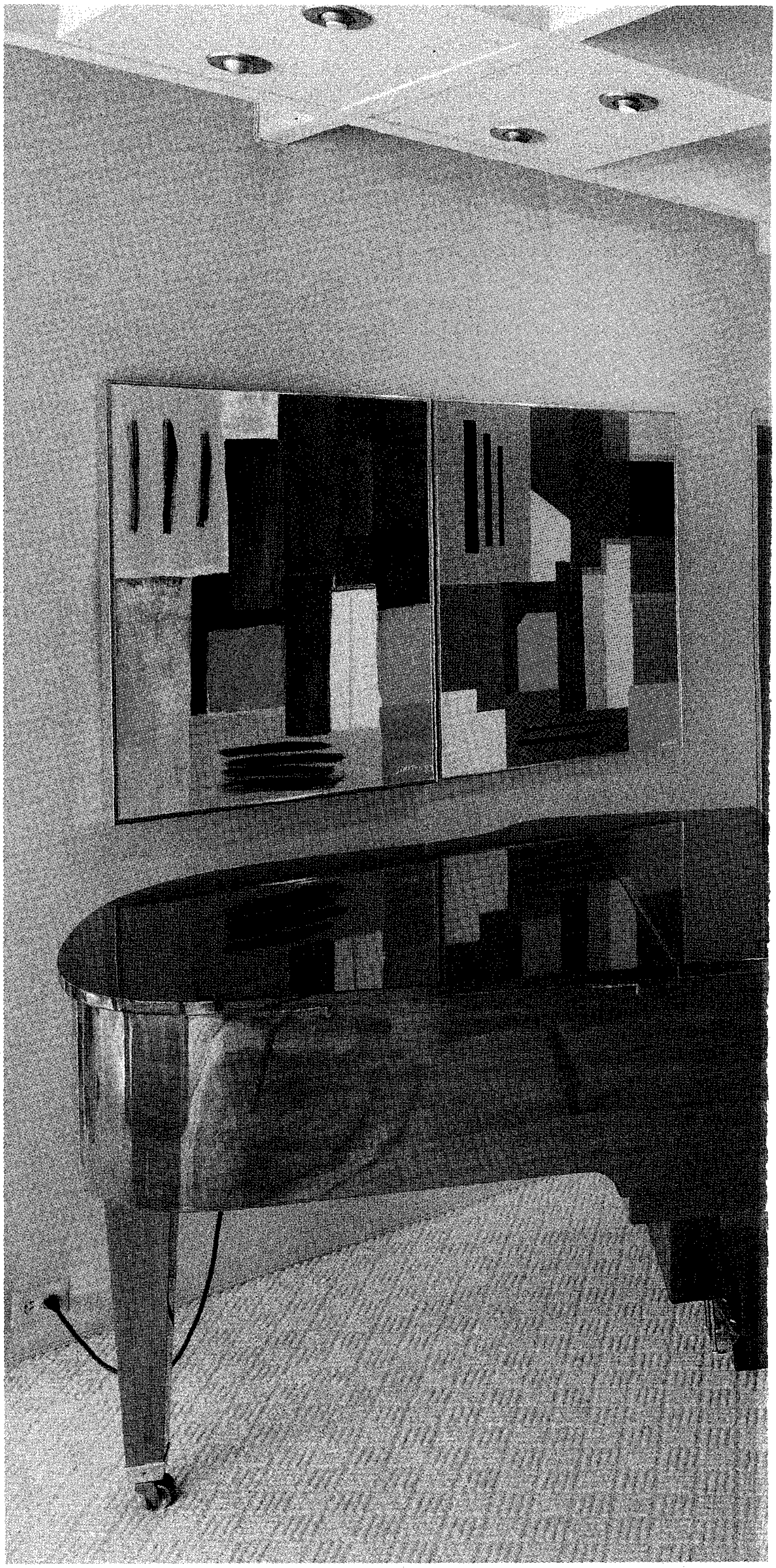
Well, not exactly under control. Last year, Sara agreed to be interviewed on Israeli state television. She threw an incredible tantrum, accusing Knesset members of making passes at her, and said of Sonia Peres that just "because


USEFUL DEGREES
Bachelor of Waitressing (B.W.)
Bachelor of Grocery Arts (B.G.A.)
Bachelor of Clothing-Display Science (B.C.D.S.)
Bachelor of Lotto (B.L.)

Sonia is not educated, and she washes dishes and plays cards—that doesn't mean I also have to do that." Sara then turned on her interviewer and finally walked out. She agreed to resume the interview only if the first part was destroyed; the tapes are now in a vault at the studios, but, Israel being Israel, the material leaked almost immediately.

In another interview, Sara insisted that her marriage was genuine and not at all politically motivated. "They cannot accept that we really love each other," she said. "Every time we hold hands it's supposed to be a show. You should see how often we hold hands when we're alone. It's unbelievable."

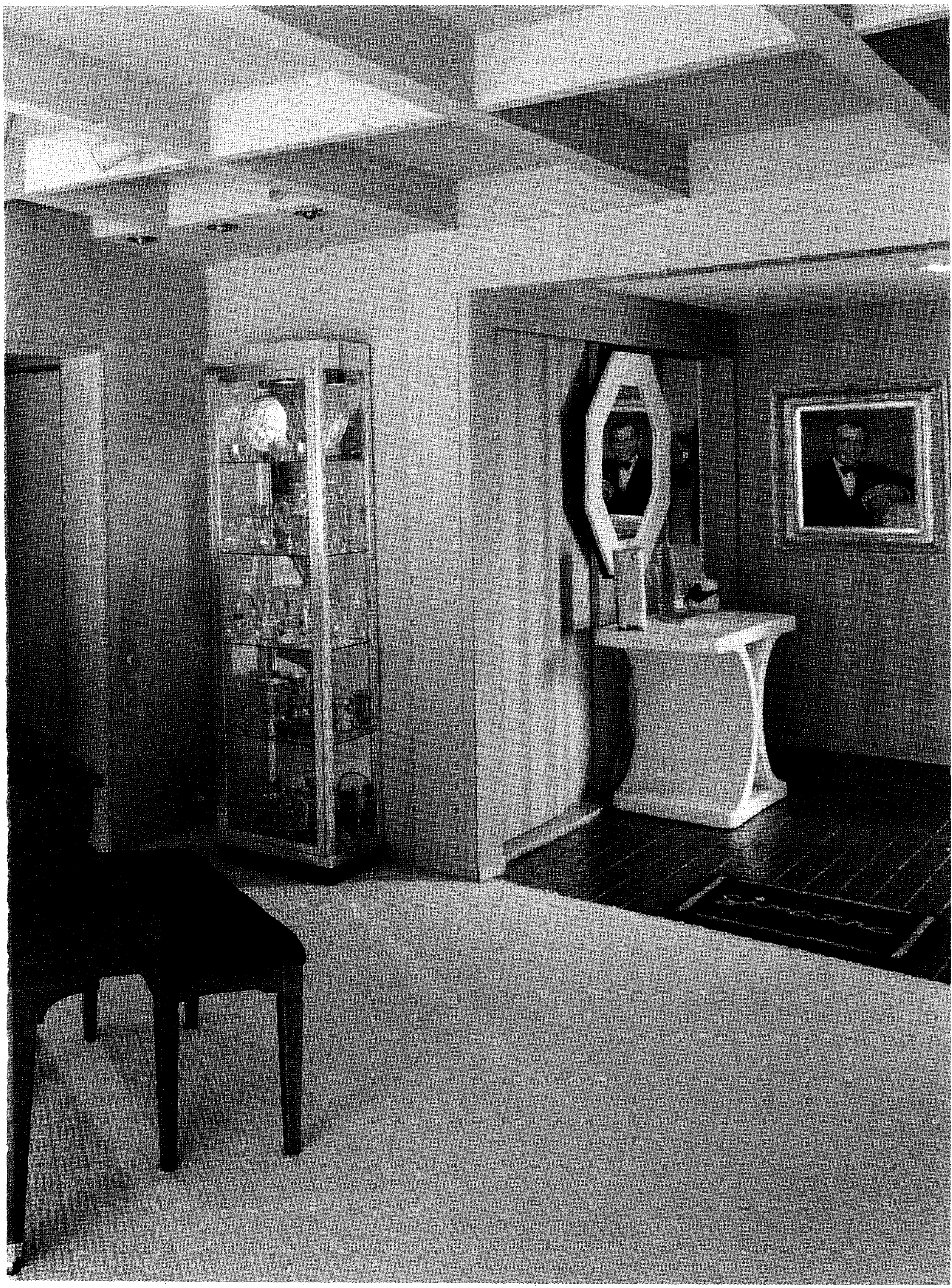
In a crude form, Netanyahu's personal situation recalls Bill Clinton's, but the comparison is weaker than it seems. Unlike Clinton, who has many layers of friends, both inside the White House and beyond, Netanyahu does not. He has forced out so many aides and ministers in his nearly two years in office that he is left mainly with yes-men. Two of Netanyahu's oldest friends, Uzi Beller, who is a doctor, and Gabi Picker, a dentist, rarely see him or talk to him any-



FRANK'S PLACE

In one's imagination, at least, Frank Sinatra was architecturally unsituated after he left the Weegee streets of Hoboken—whiling away days at Aqueduct and the Polo Grounds, avoiding Jackie Gleason, bopping between swank hotel suites, romancing Ava Gardner. But by the time he was forty Palm Springs had become a headquarters. When he bought this Rancho Mirage tract house, in the fifties, the desert town's Martini cool was a pretty pure expression of Sinatra-ism. Before long, he had a compound: nine buildings, thirty-one bathrooms, a twelve-car garage. There are a few Rat Pack vestiges, but after Sinatra married Barbara Marx the place was redecorated in high-seventies style. (The nicest piece in this room, the cheerful abstract painting over the grand piano, is by Sinatra himself.) Since 1995, it has been a corporate retreat for a Canadian conglomerate, and that's probably its stylistic destiny. But every stick, they say, is "exactly as he left it."

Photograph by Robert Polidori

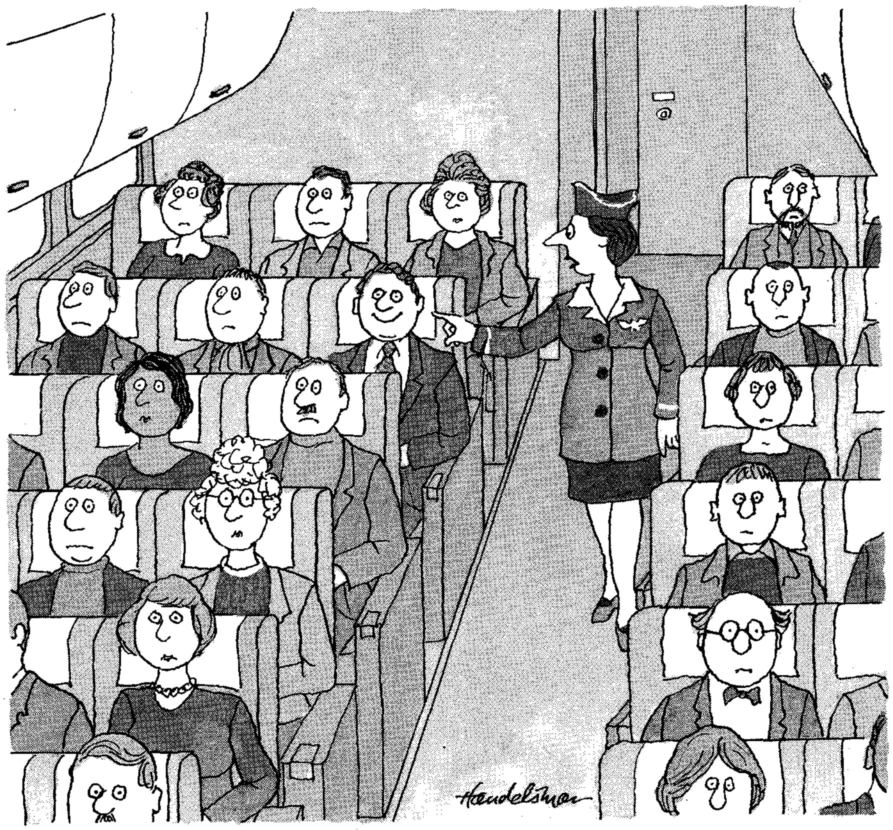


more. "Nobody sees Bibi a lot," Beller told me. "Any leader has a small circle of intimates, and Bibi just doesn't." Bar-Illan said he considers himself one of Netanyahu's two or three closest confidants, but even he said, "Bibi is very hard to read emotionally. He's very closed. It's not possible to read what he feels, even with me. I never feel I know what's in his heart or mind. I don't know who does."

An Israeli journalist who has observed Netanyahu closely said, "It's a very difficult life he has. He is a prisoner in his office. The office is a very small room. With all that security, the moment he walks out, there are several guys at his side. Then he gets into a claustrophobic Cadillac. Wherever he goes, there are these really wild security arrangements. When he goes home, he goes to something worse. He actually has no place to relax, to unwind. All these problems—the press, his family, negotiations—all of it goes along with the idea that he has of the world as always hostile and him fighting everybody and everything all the time."

Netanyahu's few pleasures include good food (he has gained nearly fifty pounds since taking office), but while he likes luxury he does not like paying. He is notorious for rarely picking up a check. The left-wing newspaper *Kol Ha'ir* has reported that Netanyahu, in the past, tried to use his name to get discounts on goods and services. Even Netanyahu's most characteristic pleasure, his Davidoff cigars, seems to have exploded in his face. In April, the papers discovered that the government was spending some three thousand dollars a month on cigars that cost thirty dollars each. Netanyahu's spokesmen initially claimed that cigars had always been bought for foreign guests, as a kind of welcoming amenity, but then past Prime Ministers and their aides rushed in to deny it. Shamir, Netanyahu's ostensible colleague in the Likud, said the only niceties he ever offered foreign guests were a cup of tea "and maybe a cracker to go with it."

NETANYAHU is certainly an outsider, too, in his relationship with Washington, for the White House is, in no small measure, a shrine to the memory of Bibi's shadow, Yitzhak Rabin. In Clinton's view, Rabin was the definition of gravitas, of historical risktaking. There are pictures of Rabin both in the Oval Office and in the upstairs residence. Hillary Clinton prizes a crystal dove given her by Rabin, and in the White House solarium there is the phrase "Shalom, Chaver" in tiles. The President has kept his *kipa*, his skullcap, from the funeral, and some sand from Rabin's grave is to be seen on a plate in his study. "It's almost a cult of Rabin here," one high-ranking White House official told me. "There's no one the President admired more or misses more."



"This is coach class. Let's lose the smile."

When Bill Clinton came on the political scene, the great lions of the late-Cold War era were gone or were fading—Gorbachev, Thatcher, Mitterrand—and the statesman he came to look up to was Rabin. Their first meeting was at the Madison Hotel in Washington, during the 1992 Presidential campaign. In the realm of foreign affairs Clinton was a neophyte, and when Rabin uncorked a lecture about Middle East politics which consumed fifty-five minutes of their allotted hour Clinton was not insulted or bored; he was grateful. From then on, Clinton gravitated to Rabin as to a kind of father figure.

"It looked to me that Clinton saw Rabin as mentor," said Eitan Haber, one of Rabin's closest aides. "They spoke on the phone constantly, coördinating every step before anything became a problem, even the smallest step. Even their agreement not to kiss or hug Arafat onstage at the White House—to make it just a handshake—was coördinated."

Rabin's assassination, in 1995, was devastating for Clinton, and he responded by going to the funeral and spending hours with the Rabin family. (By contrast, when Netanyahu went to embrace Rabin's daughter, Dalia Pilosof, whom he had known as a student, she said, "Not now. Please, not now." Rabin's widow, Leah, made it plain that she preferred the condolences of Yasir Arafat.) With Shimon Peres now the Prime Minister, the relationship with the White House remained politically close yet personally more remote. Peres was more the ideologue—cool, Francophile, aloof.

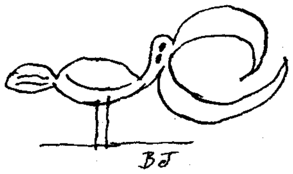
In the 1996 Israeli election, however, Clinton made no secret of his preference for Peres over Netanyahu. The major factor, of course, was that Peres favored pushing the Oslo process ahead; Netanyahu's platform consisted of his alarm about Oslo and his resistance to American pressure.

American television viewers had come to know Netanyahu as "Americanized"—an M.I.T.-educated Israeli politician with a perfect American accent and a feel for CNN and "Nightline." But Netanyahu's America was antithetical to Clinton's: it was Ronald Reagan's America. Netanyahu's political friends were Richard Perle, Ronald Lauder, and Jeanne Kirkpatrick. The journalists he favored were, of course, the ones who favored him: A. M. Rosenthal, William Safire, Charles Krauthammer. He yearned for the rise in Israel of the sort of neoconservative movement that had backed Reagan. He let Republicans on Capitol Hill know that he was one of them, a kind of Israeli Republican. And so while he spoke American, he was, and remains, deeply suspicious of the Clinton White House. *Of course* Clinton loved Rabin, he tells everyone. The Americans always love us when we are giving away everything and getting nothing in return.

When Netanyahu came to Washington for the first time as Prime Minister, he appeared determined to show everyone that there was a new man in office, one who would not be pushed around. Itamar Rabinovich, the Israeli Ambassador in Washington at the time, told me, "What I would have told Bibi to do on his first trip—not that he ever would have asked—is to have gone into the White House and said, 'Let's let bygones be bygones. I know you supported Peres in the election, but there are no grudges.' Instead, when they met, in July, 1996, Clinton came out of the meeting saying that Netanyahu behaved and spoke in a tone that didn't seem to let on that he knew that Clinton was the President of a friendly superpower and that Netanyahu was the leader of a small nation who needs the superpower's support." In short, Clinton felt he had been dissed by the leader of a country smaller than Vermont that gets three billion dollars in aid every year.

One Administration official described the personal chemistry between Clinton and Netanyahu as the same as that between the White House pets, Buddy and Socks. When Air Force One and Netanyahu's plane were parked next to each other in Los Angeles last November, Clinton decided he didn't have time for even a brief meeting. Of the relationship, one Administration official later said, "We're treating him like the President of Bulgaria. Actually, I think he"—Clinton—"will go jogging with the President of Bulgaria, so that's not fair."

Netanyahu began a trip to the United States last January by accepting the hospitality of a group of Christian evangelicals—including Jerry Falwell, who'd been selling videos that accused the President of murder. Clinton was furious, but the next morning when he met with Netanyahu he jokingly suggested, "Now we're even." Both Netanyahu and David Bar-Illan told me that they had had no idea that Falwell was attacking Clinton so ruthlessly, and Bar-Illan tried to fall on his sword, saying that he had been encouraged by a Jewish contact in New York to meet with the evangelicals because of their support for Israel. Considering how closely Netanyahu and Bar-Illan follow the American scene, their protestations of innocence are hard to believe.



"The relations have never been more tense," a senior Israeli diplomat told me. "The ironic thing is that after Bibi came back from America having not accepted things, he became a hero to his people, like Saddam Hussein withstanding American pressure."

Norman Podhoretz, the former editor of *Commentary*, mainly supports Netanyahu's hard line with the Palestinians but admitted he was shocked at his performance. "He's done amazingly poorly, and I wouldn't have expected that of him," Podhoretz said. "He used to be able to seduce anyone. . . . But as a friend he's not a reliable person. It's like the Kennedys. If he makes a promise or appointment, he doesn't necessarily keep it. Then he'll depend on his charm, like Clinton. And the magic has gone out of that trick."

WHEN I asked Netanyahu to characterize his relationship with Clinton, he took a long drag on his cigar and blew smoke through his smile. He is a bearish presence with a broad smile, and he never seemed more satisfied than now.

"It's *correct*," he said. "On a personal level there are interesting moments of affinity, because I think he has tremendous grasp of certain things that probably eluded his immediate circle. First of all, because he's probably a much better politician than any of them. So he understands certain things from reading the lay of the land. He understands our political situation better than his people, especially those who led him to take the mistaken view of trying to influence the elections. . . . I have to tell you, personally, I like him. It's very hard not to like him. I wouldn't tell you we've developed warm and cozy relations. It's not true. It's possible. It just hasn't happened."

What Netanyahu has inherited from his father is a keen notion of Us versus Them, a sense that only fools can fail to see what he sees, that Jewish history is in perpetual danger of ending completely, and that Jewish history, considering the role of assimilation in the Diaspora, is in the hands of Israel and, in no small part, its Prime Minister.

"The Jewish people have had a history unlike any other people's because they lacked the elements of national survival," he said to me. "On the other hand, they didn't perish completely. They perished *mostly*. They were about ten per cent of the Roman Empire at the time of the birth of Christ, so by any calculation they should be about a hundred and twenty million and not twelve million. The fact that we are ten per cent of what we could be is based on many forces, but it is the inability to live in a coherent place with a coherent culture.

"It is not the idea of a diaspora. Other peoples have their diasporas. The Chinese have a diaspora, a far-flung diaspora, but they have a coherent center. We lost the coherent center and were dispersed. Normally what happens to a dispersed people is that they conquer new lands or they disappear. We didn't conquer new lands, but nor did we disappear, so we were always in the twilight of our existence. Between annihilation and assimilation, you could pretty much predict that the Jewish people would not survive the twenty-first or twenty-second centuries. What happened after the worst catastrophe in our history is that we somehow amassed the national will to reforge a vital center for Jewish life here in Israel. I now think we have a Jewish future, here in Israel. It's true that, for the first time, the majority of Jews will be here in Israel sometime in the next decade. It'll happen, maybe even under my watch, I'm not sure. . . .

"You have to protect yourself. This is what the Jews didn't have. They didn't have the means to protect themselves against evil, the baser impulses of mankind. And they paid a price unlike any other people. We now have the means to protect ourselves." ♦

PORTFOLIO BY FRANÇOIS-MARIE BANIER

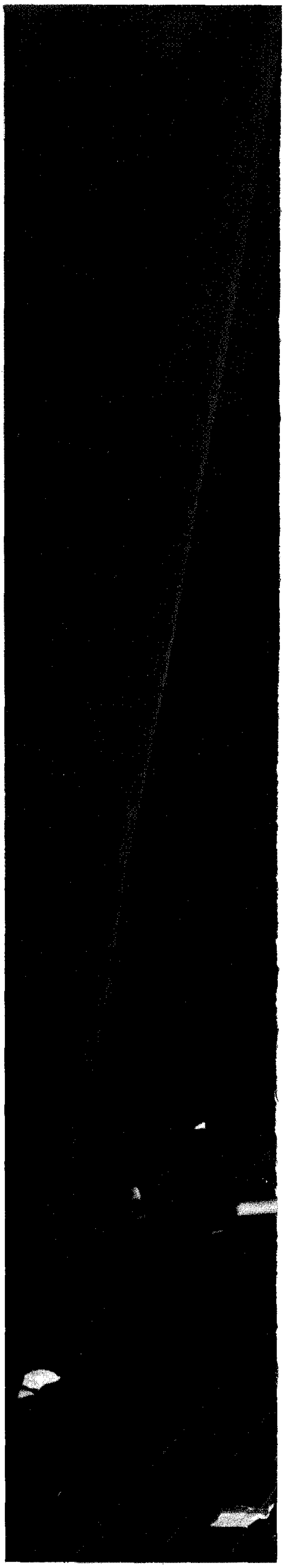
THE SALZBURG FIX

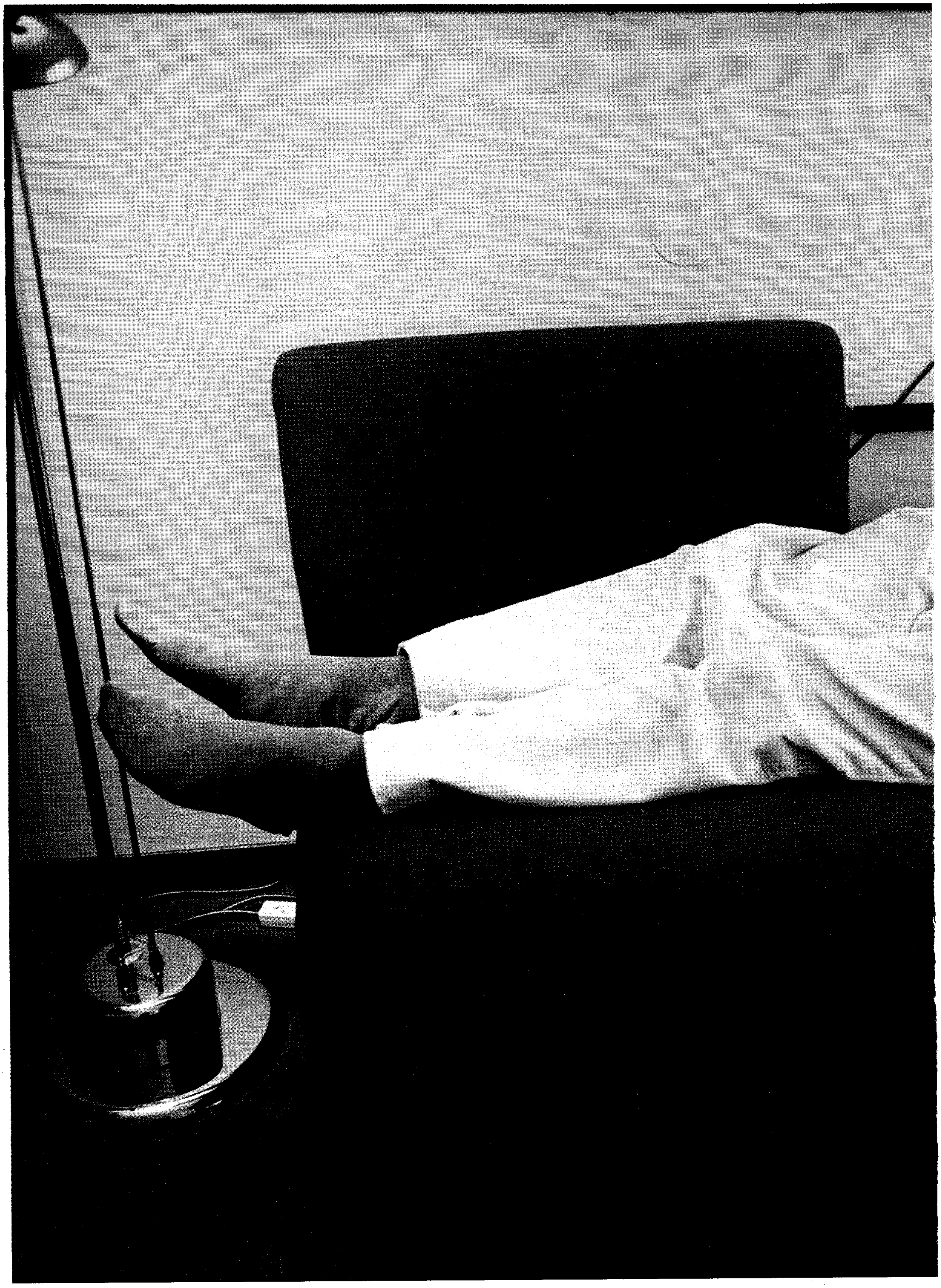
“SALZBURG is no place for my talent,” Mozart wrote of the city of his birth. “One hears nothing, there is no theatre, no opera.” But Salzburg has made amends to Mozart, to opera, to music in general. Since Max Reinhardt, Richard Strauss, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and others founded the Salzburg Festival, in 1920, the city has become the summertime capital of music and the year-round center of Mozart kitsch. More spectacularly—and more infamously—it has become the musical version of Cannes, a glamorous watering hole for classical superstars and tycoon sophisticates, and for tourists sharing in their aura.

For three decades, Salzburg was in the hands of Herbert von Karajan, the canny, icy emperor of postwar European music. During his reign, the streets were paved with princely taxes and Wagner productions were built to the sky. Since Karajan's death, in 1989, the atmosphere has become less stifling; the artistic director, Gerard Mortier, has disavowed Karajan's rigid traditionalism and embraced more offbeat fare. The summer festival, which begins August 13th, includes such oddities as Karol Szymanowski's homoerotic symbolist opera “King Roger” (under the direction of Simon Rattle), Messiaen's visionary “Saint François d'Assise,” and a concert series entitled “Go for Kurt Weill.”

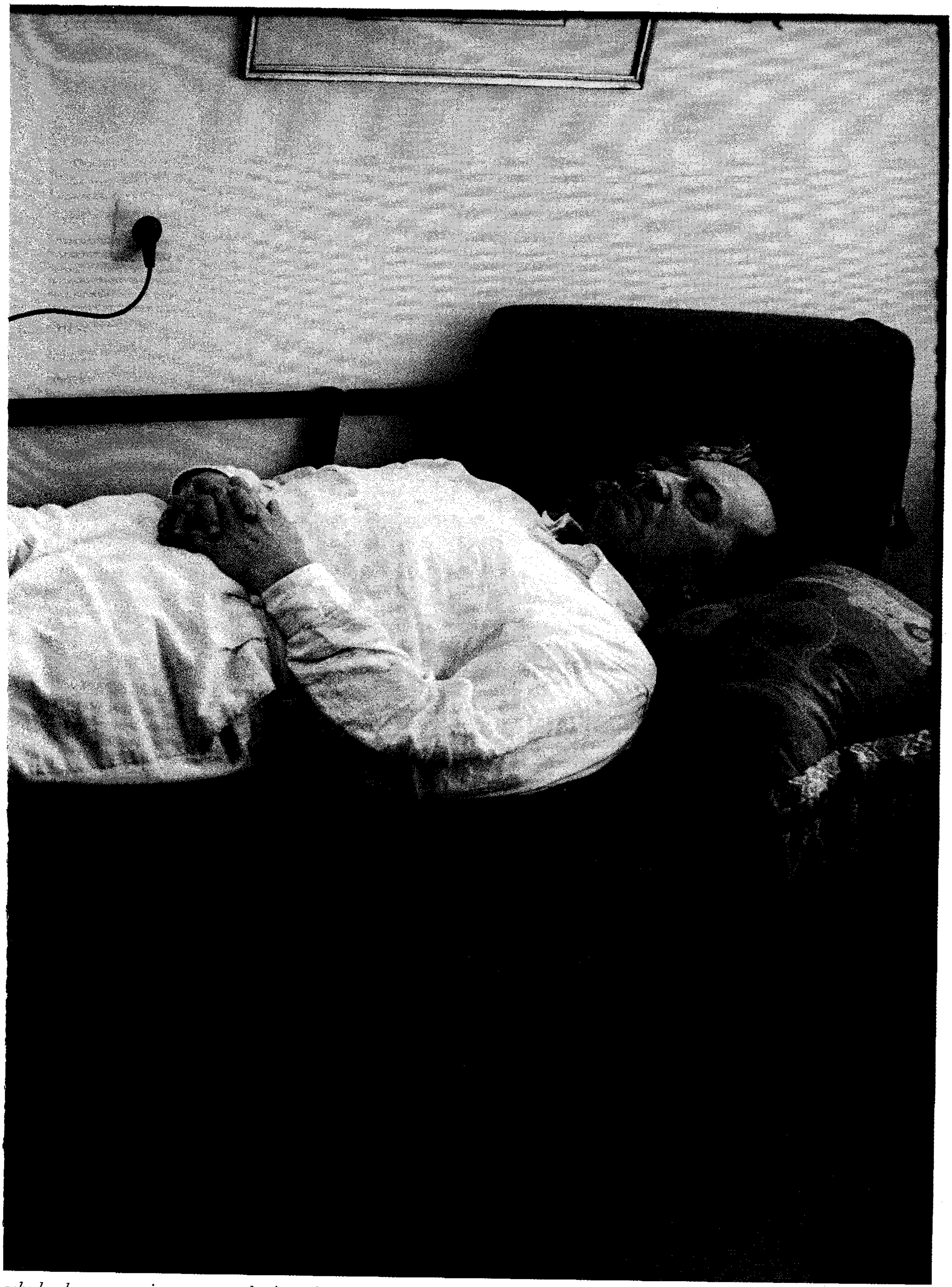
The culture vultures with the sharpest beaks favor Salzburg's Easter Festival, during which the Berlin Philharmonic plays several orchestral concerts and accompanies one opera (these photographs were taken at the festival last month). Although the *Osterfestspiele* is a Karajan creation, it now reflects the tastes of Claudio Abbado, the Philharmonic's director. Abbado is unusual among maestros for being shy, literate, and mindful of contemporary music. His interpretations are subtle, cerebral, sneakily intense. Announcing recently that he was planning to leave the Philharmonic, he said that he wanted to spend more time sailing and skiing. This past Easter, he led Moussorgsky's “Boris Godunov,” an opera that he has conducted often, in which a monk praises kings who relinquish power. —ALEX ROSS

Above: Waiters carrying food from Salzburg's Goldener Hirsch Hotel to an Easter Festival party. Right: The mezzo Marjana Lipovšek, after performing “Boris Godunov.”



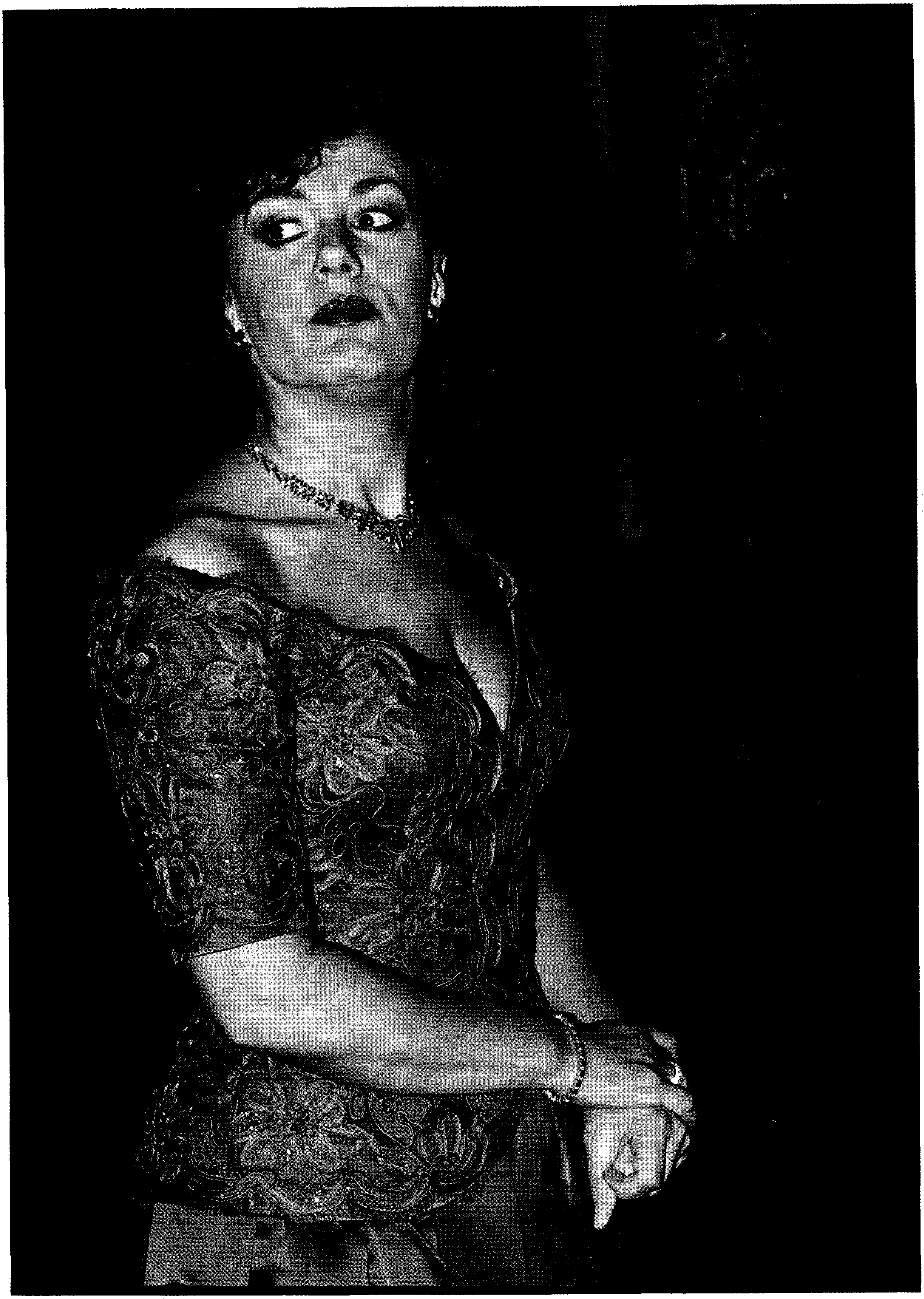


Angle of repose: the forceful Austrian conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt, an early-music and original-instrument speciali



who has become a mainstream symphonic conductor, naps before a rehearsal of the "Eroica" with the Berlin Philharmonic.

Claudio Abbado, the enigmatic outgoing director of the Berlin Philharmonic, backstage with the soprano Lisa Larsson.



The formidable singer-actress Waltraud Meier, preparing to sing Ernest Chausson's "Poème de l'Amour et de la Mer."

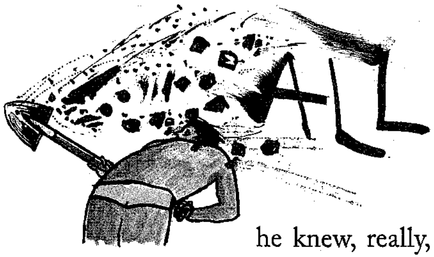
FICTION

THE UNDERGROUND GARDENS

Baldasare came to California in the nineteen-hundreds and began building a home. That much we know for sure.

BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE

But you do not know me if you think I am afraid. —*Franz Kafka, "The Burrow."*



FILIP PAGOWSKI

ALL he knew, really, was digging. He dug to eat, to breathe, to live and sleep. He dug because the earth was there beneath his feet, and men paid him to move it. He dug because it was a sacrament, because it was honorable and holy. As a boy in Sicily, he had stood beside his brothers under the sun that was like a hammer and day after day stabbed his shovel into the skin of the ancient venerable earth of their father's orchards. As a young man in Boston and New York, he had burrowed like a rodent beneath streets and rivers, scouring the walls of subway tubes and aqueducts, dropping his pick, lifting his shovel, mining dirt. And now, twenty-six years old and with the deed to seventy bleak and hard-baked acres in his back pocket, he was in California. Digging.

> FRIENDS! COME TO THE LAND OF FERTILITY WHERE THE SUN SHINES YEAR ROUND AND THE EARTH NEVER SUBMITS TO FROST! COME TO THE LAND THE ANGELS BLESSED! COME TO CALIFORNIA! WRITE NOW, c/o Euphrates Mead, Box 9, Fresno, California.

Yes, the land never froze, that was true and incontrovertible. But the sun scorched it till it was like stone, till it was as hard and impenetrable as the adobe brick the Indians and Mexicans piled up to make their shabby, dusty houses. This much Baldasare Forestiere discovered in the torporific summer of 1905, within days of disembarking from the train with his pick and shovel, his cardboard suitcase, and his meagre supply of dried pasta, flour, and beans. He'd come all the way across the country to redeem the land that would bloom with the serrate leaves and sweetly curling tendrils of his own grapes, the grapes of the Baldasare Forestiere Vineyards.

When he got down off the train, the air hot and sweet with the scent of things growing and multiplying, he was so filled with hope it was a kind of ecstasy. There were olive trees in California, orange and lemon and lime trees, spreading palms, fields of grapes and of cotton that had filled the rushing windows of the train with every kind of promise. No more sleet and snow for him, no more wet feet and overshoes or the grippe that took all the muscle out of your back and arms, but heat, good Sicilian heat, heat that baked you right down to the grateful marrow of your happy Sicilian bones.

The first thing he did was ask directions at the station, his English a labyrinth of looming verbs and truncated squawks that sounded strange in his ears but was serviceable for all that, and he soon found himself walking back in the direction he'd come, following the crucified grid of the tracks. Three miles south, then up a dry wash where two fire-scarred oaks came together like a pair of clasped arms—he couldn't miss it. At least, that was what the man on the platform had told him. He was a farmer, this man, unmistakably a farmer, in faded coveralls and a straw hat, long of nose and with two blue flecks for eyes in a blasted face. "That's where all the guineas are," he said. "That's where Mead sold 'em. Seventy acres, isn't it? That's what I figured. Same as the rest."

When he got there and set his cardboard suitcase in the dust, he couldn't help but pace off the whole seventy acres, the surveyor's map that Euphrates Mead had sent in the mail held out before him like a dowsing stick. The land was pale in a hundred shades of brown and a sere gray-green, and there was Russian thistle everywhere, the decayed thorny bones of it already crushed to chaff in his tracks. It crept down the open neck of his shirt and into his socks and shoes and the waist of his trousers, an itch of the land, abrasive and unforgiving. Overhead, vultures rose on the air currents like bits of winged ash. Lizards scuttered underfoot.

That night he ate sardines from a tin, licking the oil from his fingers and dipping soda crackers in the residue that collected in the corners, and then he spread a blanket under one of his new oak trees and slept as if he'd been knocked unconscious. In the morning he walked into town and bought a wheelbarrow. He filled the wheelbarrow with provisions and two five-gallon cans that had once held olive oil and now contained water—albeit an oleaginous and tinny-tasting variant of what he knew water to be. Then he hefted the twin handles of the new wheelbarrow till he felt the familiar flex of the muscles of his lower back, and he guided it all the long way back out to the future site of the Baldasare Forestiere Vineyards.

He'd always thought big, even when he was a boy wandering his father's orchards, the orchards that would never be his because of a simple confluence of biology and fate: his brothers had been born before him. If, God forbid, either Pietro or Domenico should die or emigrate to Argentina or Australia, there was always the other one to stand in his way. But Baldasare wasn't discouraged—he knew he was destined for greatness. Unlike his brothers, he had the gift of seeing things as they would one day be, of seeing himself in America, right here in Fresno, his seventy acres buried in grapes, the huge oak fermenting barrels rising above the cool cellar floors, his house of four rooms and a porch set on a hill and his wife on the porch, his four sons and three daughters sprinting like colts across the yard.

He didn't even stop to eat, that first day. Sweating until his eyes burned with the sting of salt, his hands molded to the shape of the wheelbarrow's polished handles, he made three more trips into town and back—twenty-four miles in all, and half of them pushing the overladen wheelbarrow. People saw him as they went about their business in carriages and farm wagons, a sun-seared little man in slept-in clothes following the tread of a single sagging tire along the shoulder of the broad dirt road. Even if he'd looked up, they probably wouldn't have nodded a greeting, but he never took his eyes off the unwavering line the tire cut in the dirt.

By the end of the week a one-room shanty stood beneath the oak, a place not much bigger than the bed he constructed of planks. It was a shelter, that was all, a space that separated him from the animals, that reminded him he was a man and not a beast. *Men are upright*, his father had told him when he was a boy, *and they have dominion over the beasts. Men live in houses, don't they? And where do the beasts live, mio figlio? In the ground, no? In a hole.*

It was some day of the following week when Baldasare began digging. (He didn't have a calendar and he didn't know Sunday from Monday, and, even if he had, where were the church and the priest to guide him?) He wanted the well to be right in front of the shack, beneath the tree where his house would one day stand, but he knew enough about water to know that it wouldn't be as easy as that. He spent a whole morning searching the immediate area, tracing dry watercourses, observing the way the hill under his shack and the one beside it abutted each other like the buttocks of a robust and fecund woman, until finally, right there, right in the cleft of the fundament, he pitched his shovel into the soil.

Two feet down he hit the hardpan. It didn't disconcert him, not at all—he never dreamed it would extend over all the seventy acres—and he attacked the rocky substrate with his pick until he was through it. As he dug deeper, he squared up the sides of his excavation with mortared rock and devised a pulley system to haul the buckets of superfluous earth clear of the hole. By the close of the second day, he needed a ladder. A week later, at fifty-two feet, he hit water, a pure sweet seep of it that got his shoes wet and climbed up the bottom rungs of his homemade ladder to a depth of four feet. And even as he set up the hand pump and exulted over the flow of shimmering water, he was contriving his irrigation system, his pipes, conduits, and channels, a water tank, a reservoir. Yes. And then, with trembling hands, he dug into the earth in the place where the first long row of canes would take root, and his new life, his life of disillusionment, began.

Three months later, when his savings had dwindled down to nothing, Baldasare became a laboring man all over again. He plowed another man's fields, planted another man's trees, dug irrigation channels and set grape canes for one stranger after another. And on his own property, after those first few weeks of feverish activity, all he'd managed, after working the soil continuously and amending it with every scrap of leaf mold and bolus of chicken manure he could scrounge, was a vegetable garden so puny and circumscribed a housewife would have been ashamed of it. He'd dreamed of independence and what had he got but wage slavery all over again?

He was depressed. Gloomy. Brooding and morose. It wasn't so much Mr. Euphrates Mead who'd betrayed him as the earth, the earth itself. Plying his shovel, sweating in a long row of sweating men, he thought of suicide in all its gaudy and elaborate guises, his eyes closed forever on his worthless land and his worthless life. And then one rainy afternoon, sitting at the counter in Siagris's Drugstore with a cup of coffee and a hamburger sandwich, he had a vision that changed all that. The Vision was concrete, as palpable as flesh, and it moved with the grace and fluidity of a living woman, a woman he could almost reach out and . . . "Can I get you anything else?" she asked.

He was so surprised he answered her in Italian. Olive eyes, hair piled up on her head like a confection, skin you could eat with a spoon—but hadn't it been old Siagris, the hairy Greek, who'd fried his hamburger and set it down on the counter before him? Or was he dreaming?

She was giving him a look, a crease between her eyebrows, hands on hips. "What did you say?"

"I mean"—fumbling after his English—"no, no, thank you. But who, I mean?"

She was serene—a very model of serenity—though the other customers, men in suits, two boys and their mother lingering over ice cream, were watching her and quietly listening for her answer. "I'm Ariadne," she said. "Ariadne Siagris." She looked over her shoulder to the black-eyed man standing at the grill. "That's my uncle."

Baldasare was charmed—and a bit dazed, too. She was beautiful—or at least to his starved eyes she was—and he wanted to say something witty to her, something flirtatious, something that would let her know that he wasn't just another sorrowful Italian laborer with no more means or expectations than the price of the next hamburger sandwich but a man of substance, a landowner, the future proprietor of the Baldasare Forestiere Vineyards. But he couldn't think of anything, his mind had impacted, his tongue gone dead in the sleeve of his mouth. Then he felt his jaws opening of their own accord and heard himself saying, "Baldasare Forestiere, at your service."

He would always remember that moment, through all the digging and lifting and wheelbarrowing to come, because she looked hard at him, as if she could see right through to his bones, and then she turned up the corners of her mouth, pressed two fingers to her lips, and giggled.

THAT night, as he lay in his miserable bed in his miserable shack that was little more than a glorified chicken coop, he could think of nothing but her. Ariadne Siagris. She was the one. She was what he'd come to America for, and he spoke her name aloud as the rain beat at his crude roof and insinuated itself through a hundred slivers and cracks to drizzle down onto his already damp blankets, spoke her name aloud and made the solemnest pledge that she would one day be his bride. But it was cold, and the night beyond the walls was limitless and black, and his teeth were chattering so forcefully he could barely get the words out. He was mad, of course, and he knew it. How could he think he had a chance with her? What could he offer her, a girl like that who'd come all the way from Chicago, Illinois, to live with her uncle, the prosperous Greek—a school-educated girl used to fine things and books? Yes, he'd made inquiries—he'd done nothing but inquire since he'd left the drugstore that afternoon. Her parents were dead,

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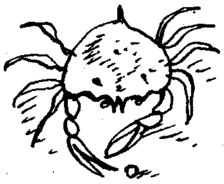
killed at a railway crossing, and she was nineteen years old, with two younger sisters and three brothers, all of them farmed out to relatives. Ariadne. Ariadne Siagris.

The rain was relentless. It spoke and sighed and roared. He was wearing every stitch of clothing he possessed, wrapped in his blankets and huddled next to the coal-oil lamp, and still he froze, even here in California. It was an endless night, an insufferable night, but a night in which his mind was set free to roam the universe of his life, one thought piled atop another like bricks in a wall, until at some point, unaccountably, he was thinking of the tunnels he'd excavated in New York and Boston, how clean they were, how warm in winter and cool in summer, how they smelled, always, of the richness of the earth. Snow could be falling on the streets above, the gutters frozen, wind cutting into people's eyes, but below ground there was no weather, none at all. He thought about that, pictured it—the great arching tubes carved out of the earth and the locomotive with a train of cars standing there beneath the ground and all the passengers staring placidly out the windows—and then he was asleep.



The next morning, he began to dig again. The rain had gone, and the sun glistened like spilled oil over his seventy acres of mire and hardpan. He told himself he was digging a cellar—a proper cellar for the house he would one day build, because he hadn't given up, not yet, not Baldasare Forestiere—but even then, even as he spat on his hands and raised the pick above his head, he knew that there was more to it than that. The pick rose and fell, the shovel licked at the earth with all the probing intimacy of a tongue, and the wheelbarrow groaned under one load after another. Baldasare was digging. And he was happy, happier than he'd been since the day he stepped down from the train, because he was digging for her, for Ariadne.

But then the cellar was finished—a fine deep vaulted space in which he could not only stand erect, at his full height of five feet four inches, but thrust his right arm straight up over his head and still only just manage to touch the ceiling—and he found himself at a loss for what to do next. He could have squared up the corners and planed the walls with his spade till all the lines were rectilinear, but he didn't want that. That was the fashion of all the rooms he'd ever lived in, and as he scraped and smoothed and tamped he realized it didn't suit him. No, his cellar was dome-shaped, like the apse of the cathedral in which he'd worshipped as a boy, and its entrance was protected from the elements by a long broad ramp replete with gutters that drained into a small reflecting pool just outside the wooden door. And its roof, of course, was of hardpan, impervious to the rain and sun, and more durable than any shingle or tile.

He spent two days smoothing out the slope of the walls and tidying and levelling the floor, working by the light of the coal-oil lamp while in the realm above the sky threw up a tatter of cloud and burned with a sun in the center of it till the next storm rolled in to snuff it out like a candle. When the rain came, it seemed like the most natural thing in the world to move his clothes and his bed and his homemade furniture down into the new cellar, which was snug and watertight. Besides, he reasoned, even as he fashioned himself a set of shelves and broke through the hardpan to run a stovepipe out into the circumambient air, what did he need a cellar for—a strict cellar, that is—if he couldn't grow the onions, apples, potatoes, and carrots to store in it?

Once the stove was installed and had baked all the moisture out of the place, he lay on the hard planks of his bed through a long rainy afternoon, smoking one cigarette after another and thinking about what his father had said—about the animals and how they lived in the ground, in holes. His father was a wise man. A man of character and substance. But he wasn't in California and he wasn't in love with Ariadne Siagris and he didn't have to live in a shack the pigeons would have rejected. It took him a while, but the conclusion Baldasare finally reached was that he was no animal—he was practical, that was all—and he barely surprised himself when he got up from the bed, fetched his shovel, and began to chip away at the east wall of his cellar. He could already see a hallway there, a broad grand hallway, straight as a plumb line and as graceful and sensible as the arches the Romans of antiquity put to such good use in their time. And beyond that, as the dirt began to fall and the wheelbarrow shuddered to receive it, he saw a kitchen and bedroom opening onto an atrium, he saw grape and wisteria vines snaking toward the light, camellias, ferns, and impatiens overflowing clay pots and baskets—and set firmly in the soil, twenty feet below the surface, an avocado tree, as heavy with fruit as any peddler's cart.

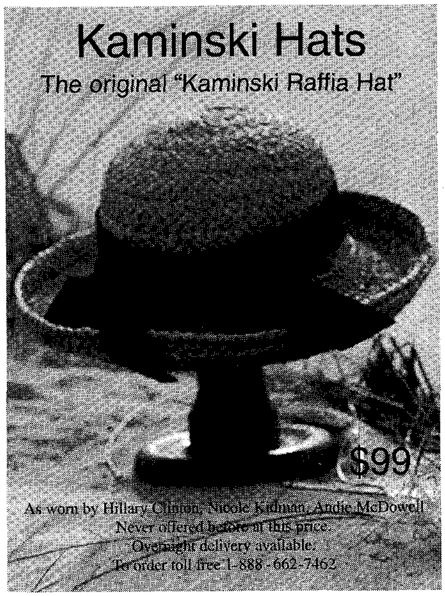
The winter wore on. There wasn't much hired work this time of year—the grapes had been picked and pressed, the vines cut back, the fig trees pruned, and the winter crops were in the ground. Baldasare had plenty of time on his hands. He wasn't idle—he just kept right on digging—nor was he destitute. Modest in his needs and frugal by habit, he'd saved practically everything he'd earned through the summer and fall, mending his own clothes, eating little more than boiled eggs and pasta, using his seventy acres as a place to trap rabbits and songbirds and to gather wood for his stove. His one indulgence was tobacco—that, and a weekly hamburger sandwich at Siagris's Drugstore.

Chewing, sipping coffee, smoking, he studied his future bride there, as keen as any scholar intent on his one true subject. He made little speeches to her in his head, casual remarks he practiced over and over till he got them right—or thought he did, anyway. Lingering over his coffee after cleaning the plate of crumbs with a dampened forefinger, he would wait till she came near with a glass or washcloth in hand, and he would blurt, "One thinks the weather will change, is that not true?" Or, "This is the most best sandwich of hamburger my mouth will ever receive." And she? She would show her teeth in a little equine smile, or she would giggle, then sometimes sneeze, covering her nose and mouth with one hand, as her late mother had no doubt taught her to do. All the while, Baldasare feasted on the sight of her. Sometimes he would sit there at the counter for two or three hours, until Siagris the Greek made an impatient remark, and he would rise in confusion, his face suffused with blood, bowing and apologizing, until he found his way to the door.

It was during this time of close scrutiny that he began to detect certain small imperfections in his bride-to-be. Despite her education, for instance, she seemed to have inordinate difficulty making change or reading the menu off the chalkboard on the wall behind her. She'd begun to put on weight, too, picking at bits of doughnut or fried potatoes the customers left on their plates. If she'd been substantial when Baldasare first laid eyes on her, she was much more than that now—stout, actually. As stout as Signora Cardino back home in Messina, who was said to drink olive oil instead of wine and to breakfast on sugared cream and cake. And then there were her eyes—or, rather, her right eye. It had a cast in it, and how he'd missed that on the day he was first smitten he couldn't say. But he had to look twice to notice the hairs on her chin—as stiff as a cat's whiskers and just as translucent—and, as far as he was concerned, the red blotches that had begun to appear on the perfect skin of her hands and throat might have been nothing more than odd splashes of marinara sauce, as if she'd got too close to the pot.

Another lover, less blinded by the light of certitude than Baldasare, might have found these blemishes a liability, but Baldasare treasured them. They were part of her, part of that quiddity that made her unique among women. He watched with satisfaction as her hips and buttocks swelled, so that even at nineteen she walked with a waddle, looked on with a soaring heart as the blotches spread from her throat to her cheeks and brow, and her right eye stared out of her head, across the room and out the window, surer each day that she was his. After all, who else would see in her what he saw and love her the way he did? Who but Baldasare Forestiere would come forward to declare himself? And he would declare himself soon—as soon as he finished digging.

TWO years passed. He worked for other men and saved every cent of his wages, worse than any miser, and in his free time he dug. When he completed a passage or a room or carved his way to the sky for light, he could already see the next passage and the next room beyond that. He had a vision, yes, and he had Ariadne to think of, but even so he wasn't the sort to sit around idle. He didn't have the gift of letters, he didn't play violin or mouth organ, and he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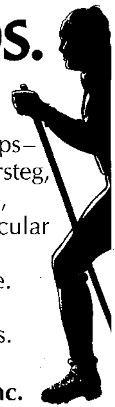
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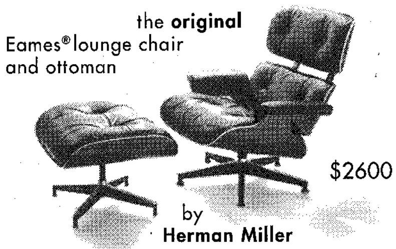
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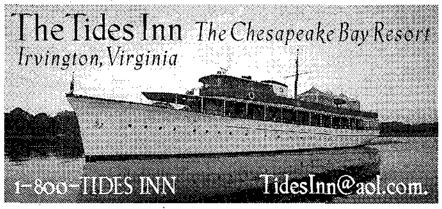
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rarely visited his neighbors. The vaudeville theatre was a long way off, too far to walk, and he only went there once, with Lucca Albanese, a vineyard worker with whom he'd struck up a friendship. There were comedians and jugglers and pretty women dancing like birds in flight, but all the while he was regretting the fifteen-cent admission, and he never went back. No, he stayed home with his shovel and his vision, and many days he didn't know morning from night.

Saturdays, though, he kept sacred. Saturday was the day he walked the three miles to Siagris's Drugstore, through winter rains and summer heat that reached a hundred and sixteen degrees Fahrenheit. He prided himself on his constancy, and he was pleased to think that Ariadne looked forward to his weekly visits as much as he did. His place at the end of the counter was always vacant, as if reserved for him, and he relished the little smiles with which she greeted him and the sweet flow of familiar phrases that dropped so easily from her supple American lips: "So how've you been?" "Nice day." "Think it's coming on to rain?"

As time went on they became increasingly intimate. She told him of her uncle's back pain, the illness of her cat, her older brother's ascension to assistant floor supervisor at the Chicago Iron Works, and he told her of his ranch and of the spaciousness of his living quarters. "Twelve room," he said. "Twelve *room, and all to myself.*" And then came the day when he asked her, in his runaway English, if she would come with him to the ranch for a picnic. "But not just the picnic," he said, "but also the scene, how do you say, the scene of the place, and my, my house, because I want—I need—you see, I . . . "

She was leaning over the counter, splotchy and huge. Her weight had stabilized in the past year—she'd reached her full growth, finally, at the age of twenty-one—and she floated above her feet like one of the airships the Germans so prized. "Yes," she said, and she giggled and sneezed. "I'd love to."

The following Sunday he came for her, lightly ascending the sun-bleached steps to the walkup above the drugstore where she lived with her uncle and aunt and their five children. It was a hot September morning, all of Fresno and the broad dusty valley beyond held in the grip of something stupendous, a blast of air so sere and scorching you would have thought the whole world was a pizza oven with the door open wide. Siagris the Greek answered his knock. He was in his shirtsleeves, and the sweat had made a washcloth of his garments, the white field of his shirt stuck like a postage stamp to the bulge of his belly. He didn't smile, but he didn't look displeased, either, and Baldasare understood the look: Siagris didn't like him, not one bit, and in other circumstances might have gone out of his way to squash him like a bug, but then he had a niece who took up space and ate like six nieces, and Baldasare could just maybe deliver him from that. "Come in," he said, and there was Baldasare, the cave dweller, in a room in a house two stories above the ground.

Up here, inside, it was even hotter. The Siagris children lay about like swatted flies, and Mrs. Siagris, her hair like some wild beast clawing at her scalp, poked her head around the corner from the kitchen. It was too hot to smile, so she grimaced instead and pulled her head back out of sight. And then, in the midst of this suffocating scene, the voice of a ventriloquist cried out, "He's here," and Ariadne appeared in the hallway.

She was all in white, with a hat the size of a tabletop perched on the mighty pile of her hair. He was melting already, in the heat, but when she focussed her wild eye on him and turned up her lips in the shyest of smiles, he melted a little more.

Outside, in the street, she gave him her arm, which was something of a problem, because she was so much taller, and he had to reach up awkwardly to take it. He was wearing his best suit of clothes, washed just the evening before, and the unfamiliar jacket clung to him like dead skin while the new celluloid collar gouged at his neck and the tie threatened to throttle him. They managed to walk the better part of a block before she put her feet together and came to a halt. "Where's your carriage?" she asked.

Carriage? Baldasare was puzzled. He didn't have a carriage—he didn't even have a horse. "I no got," he said, and he strained to give her his best smile. "We walk."

"Walk?" she echoed. "In this heat? You must be crazy."

"No," he said, "we walk," and he leaned forward and exerted the most delicate but insistent pressure on the monument of her arrested arm.

Her cheeks were splotched under the crisp arc of shadow the hatbrim threw over her face and her olive eyes seemed to snatch at his. "You mean," and her voice was scolding and intemperate, "you ain't even got a wagon? You with your big house you're always telling me about?"

The following Sunday, though it wounded him to throw his money away

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like some Park Avenue millionaire, he pulled up to Siagris's Drugstore in a hired cabriolet. It was a clear day, the sun high and merciless, and the same scenario played itself out in the walkup at the top of the stairs, except that this time Baldasare seemed to have things in hand. He was as short with Siagris as Siagris was with him, and he led Ariadne (who had refused the previous week to go farther than a bench in the park at the end of the street) out the door, down the steps, and into the carriage like a cavaliere of old.

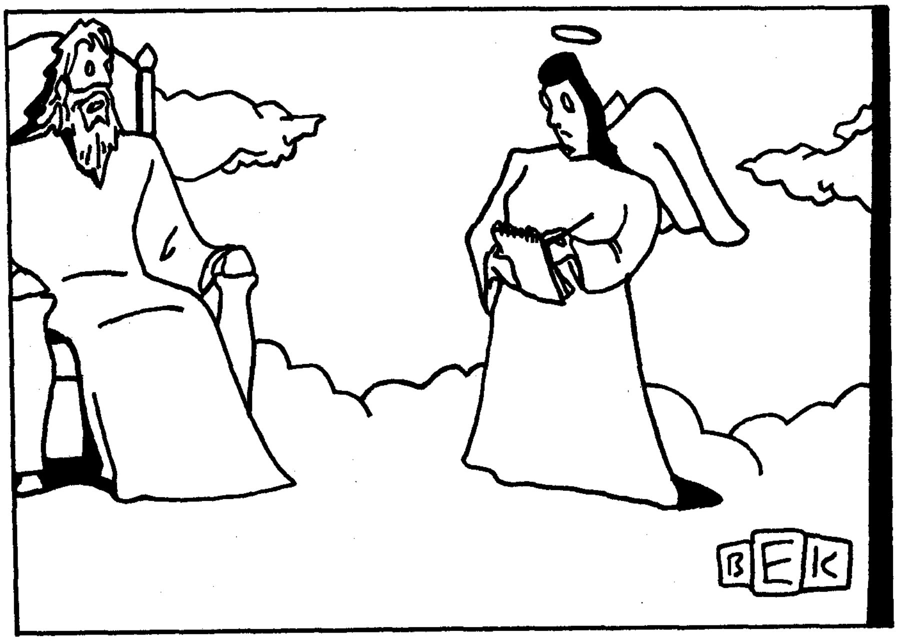
Baldasare didn't like horses. They were big and crude and expensive and they always seemed to need grooming, shoeing, doctoring, and oats, and the horse attached to the cabriolet was no exception. It was a stupid, flatulent, broad-flanked, mouse-colored thing, and it did its utmost to resist every touch of the reins and thwart every desire of the man wielding them. Baldasare was in a sweat by the time they reached his property, every square inch of his clothing soaked through like a blotter, and his nerves were frayed raw. Nor had he made any attempt at conversation during the drive, so riveted was he on the task at hand, and when they finally pulled up in the shade of his favorite oak he turned to Ariadne and saw that she hadn't exactly enjoyed the ride, either.

Her hat was askew, her mouth set in a thin unyielding line. She was glistening with sweat, her hands like doughballs fried in lard, and a thin integument of moistened dust clung to her features. She gave him a concentrated frown. "Well, where is it?" she demanded. "Why are we stopping here?"

His tongue ran ahead of him, even as he sprang down from the carriage and scurried to her side to help her to alight. "This is what I have want for to show you, and so long, because—well, because I am making it for you."

He studied the expression of her face as she looked from the disreputable shack to the hummock of the well and out over the heat-blasted scrub to where the crown of his avocado tree rose from the ground like an illusion. And then she saw the ramp leading down to the cellar. She was stunned, he could see it in her face and there was no denying it, but he watched her struggle to try on a smile and focus her eyes on his. "This is a prank, ain't it? You're just fooling with me and your house is really over there behind that hill"—pointing now from her perch atop the carriage—"ain't it?"

"No, no," he said, "no. It's this, you see?" And he indicated the ramp, the crown of the avocado, the bump where the inverted cone of a new atrium broke the surface. "Twelve room, I tell you, twelve room." He'd become insistent, and he had his hand on her arm, trying to lead her down from the carriage—if only she would come, if only she would see—and he wanted to tell her how cool and fresh-smelling it was down there beneath the earth, and how cheap it was



"Oh, and c.c. the Devil."

to build and expand, to construct a nursery, a sewing room, anything she wanted. All it took was a strong back and a shovel, and not one cent wasted on nails and lumber and shingles that fell apart after five years in the sun. He wanted to tell her, but the words wouldn't come, and he tried to articulate it all through the pressure of his hand on her arm, tugging, as if the whole world depended on her getting down from that carriage—and it did, it did!

"Let go!" she cried, snatching her arm away, and then she was sobbing, gasping for breath as if the superheated air were some other medium altogether and she were choking on it. "You said . . . *twelve rooms!*"

He tried to reach for her again—"Please," he begged, "please"—but she jerked back from him so violently the carriage nearly buckled on its springs. Her face was furious, streaked with tears and dirt. "You bully!" she cried. "You guinea, dago, wop! You're no better than a murderer!"

Three days later, in a single paragraph set off by a black border, the local paper announced her engagement to Hiram Broadbent, of Broadbent's Poultry & Eggs.

An engagement wasn't a marriage, that's what Baldasare was thinking when Lucca Albanese gave him the news. An engagement could be broken, like a promise or even a contract. There was hope yet, there had to be. "Who is this Hiram Broadbent?" he demanded.

They were sharing a meal of beans and vermicelli in Baldasare's subterranean kitchen, speaking in a low tragic Italian. Lucca had just read the announcement to him, the sharp-edged English words shearing at him like scissors and the pasta turning to cotton wadding in his throat. He was going to choke. He was going to vomit.

"Big, fat man," Lucca said. "Wears a straw hat winter and summer. He's a drunk, mean as the devil, but his father owns a chicken farm that supplies all the eggs for the local markets in Fresno, so he's always got money in his pocket. Hell, if you ever came out of your hole, you'd know who I'm talking about."

"You don't think—I mean, Ariadne wouldn't really . . . would she?"

Lucca ducked his head and worked his spoon in the plate. "You know what my father used to say when I was a boy in Catania?"

"What?"

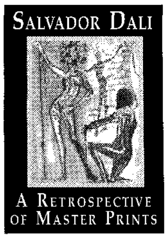
"There're plenty of fish in the sea."

But that didn't matter to Baldasare—he wanted only one fish. Ariadne. Why had he been digging, if not for her? He'd created an underground palace, with the smoothest of corners and the most elegant turnings and capacious courtyards, just to give her space, to give her all the room she could want after having to live at her uncle's mercy in that cramped walkup over the drugstore. Didn't she complain about it all the time? If only she knew, if only she'd give him a chance and descend just once into the cool of the earth, he was sure she'd change her mind—she had to.

There was a problem, though. An insurmountable problem. She wouldn't see him. He came into the drugstore, hoping to make it all up to her, to convince her that he was the one, the only one, and she backed away from the counter, muttered a word to her uncle, and melted away through the sunstruck mouth of the back door. Siagris whirled around like an animal startled in a cave, his shoulders hunched and his head held low. "We don't want you in here anymore, understand?" he said. There was the sizzle of frying, the smell of onions, tuna fish, a row of surprised white faces staring up from pie and coffee. Siagris leaned into the counter and made his face as ugly as he could. "*Capisce*?"

Baldasare Forestiere was not a man to be easily discouraged. He thought of sending her a letter, but he'd never learned to write, and the idea of having someone write it for him filled him with shame. For the next few days he brooded over the problem, working all the while as a hired laborer, shovelling, lifting, pulling, bending, and as his body went through the familiar motions his mind was set free to achieve a sweated lucidity. By the end of the third day, he'd decided what to do.

That night, under cover of darkness, he pushed his wheelbarrow into town along the highway and found his way to the vacant lot behind the drugstore. Then he started digging. All night, as the constellations drifted in the immensity overhead until one by one they fled the sky, Baldasare plied his shovel, his pick, and his rake. By morning, at first light, the outline of his message



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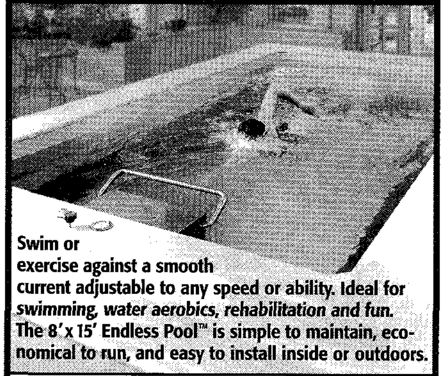

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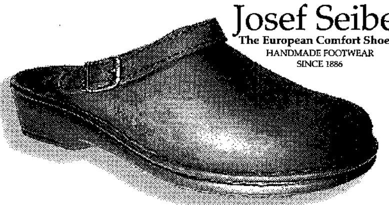

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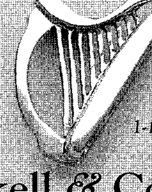

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was clearly visible from the second-story window of the walkup above the store. It was a heart, a valentine, a perfectly proportioned symbol of his love dug three feet deep in the ground and curving gracefully over the full area of what must have been a quarter-acre lot.

When the outline was finished, Baldasare started on the interior. In his mind's eye, he saw a heart-shaped crater there in the lot, six feet deep at least, with walls as smooth as cement, a hole that would show Ariadne the depth of the vacancy she'd left in him. He was coming up the ramp he'd shaped of earth with a full wheelbarrow to spread over the corners of the lot, when he glanced up to see Siagris and two of his children standing there peering down at him. Siagris's hands were on his hips. He looked more incredulous than anything else. "What in Christ's name do you think you're doing?" he sputtered.

Baldasare, swinging wide with his load of dirt so that Siagris and the children had to take a quick step back, didn't even hesitate. He just kept going to a point in the upper corner of the frame where he was dumping and raking out the dirt. "Digging," he said over his shoulder.

"But you can't. This is private property. You can't just dig up people's yards, don't you know that? Eh? Don't you know anything?"

Baldasare didn't want a confrontation. He was a decent man, mild and pacifistic, but he was determined, too. As he came by again with the empty wheelbarrow and eased it down the ramp, he said, "Tell her to look. She is the one. For her I do this."

After that, he was deaf to all pleas, threats, and remonstrations, patiently digging, shoring up his walls, spreading his dirt. The sun climbed in the sky. He stopped only to take an occasional drink from a jug of water or to sit on his overturned wheelbarrow and silently eat a sandwich from a store of them wrapped in butcher's paper. He worked through the day, tireless, and though the sheriff came and threatened him, even the sheriff couldn't say with any certainty who owned the lot Baldasare was defacing—couldn't say, that is, without checking the records down at the courthouse, which he was going to do first thing in the morning, Baldasare could be sure of that.

It began to get dark. Baldasare had cleared the entire cutout of his heart to a depth of three feet, and he wasn't even close to quitting. Six feet, he was thinking, that's what it would take, and who could blame him if he kept glancing up at the unrevealing window of the apartment atop the drugstore in the hope of catching a glimpse of his inamorata there? If she was watching, if she knew what he was doing for love of her, if she saw the lean muscles of his arms strain and his back flex, she gave no sign of it. Undeterred, Baldasare dug on.

And then there came a moment, and it must have been past midnight, the neighborhood as silent as the grave and Baldasare working by the light of a waxing moon, when two men appeared at the northern edge of the excavation, right where the lobes of the heart came together in an elegant loop. "Hey, wop," one of them yelled down to where Baldasare stood. "I don't know who you think you are, but you're embarrassing my fiancée, and I mean to put an end to it."

The man's shadow under that cold moon was immense—it could have been the shadow of a bear or a buffalo. The other shadow was thinner, but broad across the shoulders—where it counted—and it danced on shadowy feet. There was no sound but the slice of Baldasare's shovel and the slap of the dirt as it dropped into the wheelbarrow.

He was a small man, Baldasare, but the hundreds of tons of dirt he'd moved in his lifetime had made iron of his limbs, and when they fell on him he fought like a man twice his size. Still, the odds were against him, and Hiram Broadbent, fuelled by good Kentucky bourbon and with the timely assistance of Calvin Thompson, a farrier and amateur boxer, was able to beat him to the ground. And, once he was down, Broadbent and Thompson kicked him with their heavy boots until he stirred no more.

When Baldasare was released from the hospital, he was a changed man—or at least to the degree that the image of Ariadne Siagris no longer infested his brain. He went back home and sat in a bentwood rocker and stared at the sculpted dirt walls of the kitchen, which gave onto the atrium and the striated trunk of its lone avocado tree. His right arm was in a sling, with a cast on it from the elbow down, and he was bound up beneath his shirt like an Egyptian mummy with all the tape it took to keep his cracked ribs in place. After a week or so—his mourning period, as he later referred to it—he found himself one evening in the last and deepest of his rooms, the one at the end of the passage that led to the new atrium, where he was thinking of planting a lemon tree or maybe a quince. It was preternaturally quiet. The earth seemed to breathe with and for him.

And then suddenly he began to see things, all sorts of things—a rush of raw design and finished image that flickered across the wall before him like one of Edison's moving pictures. What he saw was a seventy-acre underground warren that beckoned him on, a maze like no other, with fishponds and gardens open to the sky above, and more, much more—a gift shop and an Italian restaurant with views of subterranean grottoes and a lot for parking the carriages and automobiles of the patrons who would flock there to see what he'd accomplished in his time on earth. It was a complete vision, more eloquent than any set of blueprints or elevations, and it staggered him. He was a young man still, healing by the day, and while he had a long way to go, at least now he knew where he was going. *Baldasare Forestiere's Underground Gardens*, he said to himself, trying out the name, and then he said it aloud: "Baldasare Forestiere's Underground Gardens."

Standing there in the everlasting silence beneath the earth, he reached out a hand to the wall in front of him, his left hand, pronating the palm as if to bless some holy place. And then, awkwardly at first, but with increasing grace and agility, he began to dig. ♦

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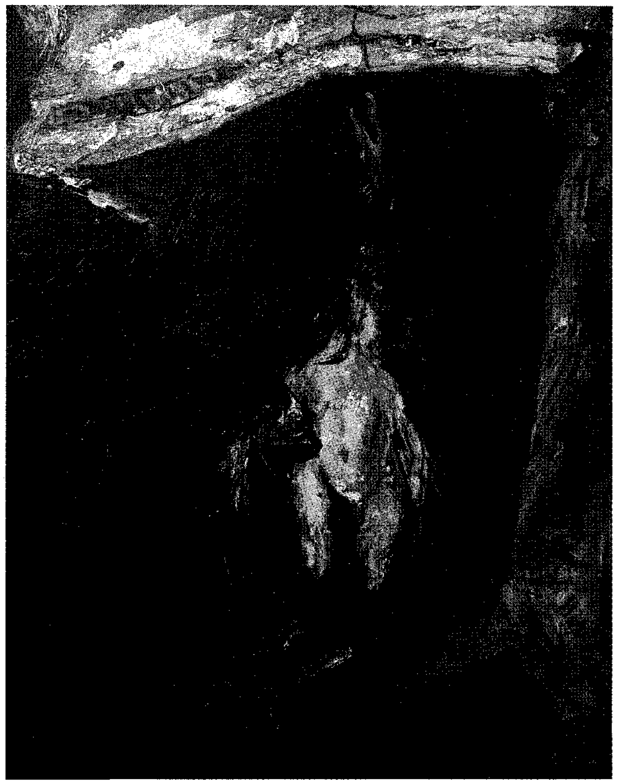


AND the prize for the least well-advised museum publicity stunt goes to . . . the Jewish Museum, whose press kit for its current show brightly announces, "Café Weissman introduces new menu inspired by great French painter Chaim Soutine." The mind reels. The palate gags. The scene unfolds: "Waiter, give me a pair of those three-day-old herring, and for an entrée I guess I'll take the flyblown mini-carcass of prime—and make it *bloody.* And the lady will be having . . . Sharon? The pan-seared skate with hanging entrails?"

In fact, the café's idea of Soutine-inspired fare is (surprise) salmon en croute on a bed of couscous. But no one who walks past the livid, shrieking paintings that fill the museum's show will suppose that this painter was in the business of cooking up comfort food for the eye.

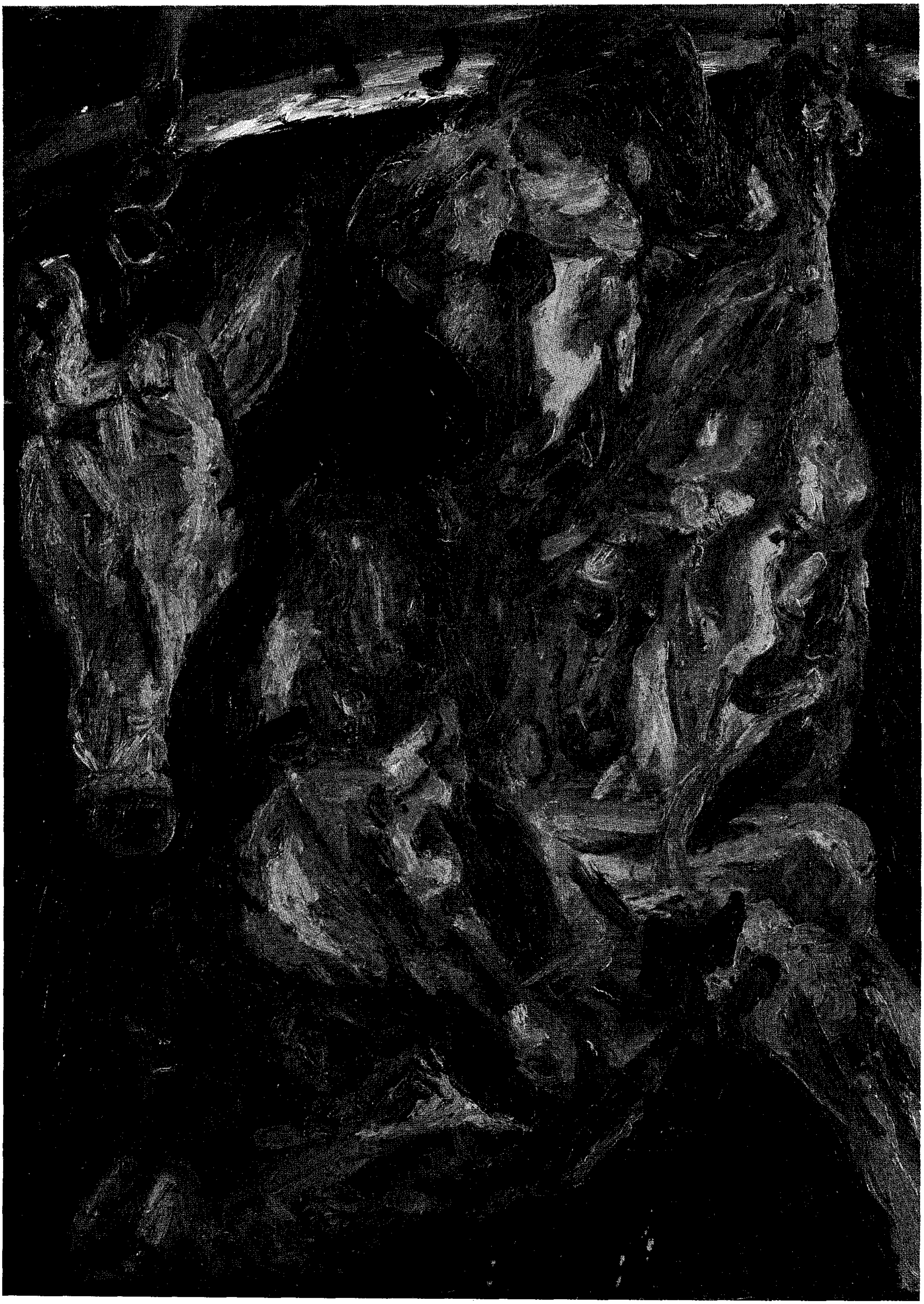
Chaim Soutine was the last and most ferocious of the great European Expressionists. He arrived in Paris in 1913, from Jewish Lithuania, when Expressionism was beginning to run out of steam, and when Fauvist artists like Derain and Dunoyer de Segonzac were turning away from the painting of inner turmoil and toward a more decorative aesthetic. Soutine, on the other hand, made van Gogh (whose obvious influence he nonetheless denied) look tame by comparison. At a time when modernism, led by the Cubists, was becoming ever more cerebral, Soutine's painting, with its extreme distortions of form and its howling color, was shockingly visceral.

Soutine was the gutsiest of all the Expressionists—if not necessarily the most courageous, certainly the most intestinally fixated. This is not simply a matter of his subjects, although they included slaughtered animals in varying degrees of putrefaction or preservation and shifty-eyed cooks with meat-cleaver hands. For the background of his 1918 self-portrait—all jug ears, blubbery lips, and brutally cropped hair—Soutine chose an acid-green color that can only be described as bilious. The 1922 "Group of Trees" resembles nothing so much as a lower digestive tract extracted from its cavity and re-spooled, vertically, around a collapsing house. Soutine, who was afflicted with chronic stomach troubles, brought his alimentary turmoil right into his brushwork, whose peristaltically pulsing, wavelike rhythms make him the inventor (and sole practitioner) of gastric Expressionism. All Expressionism, of course, attempts to signify in paint the inner condition of the artist's mind and passions. But Soutine went further, translating the turbulence of his *body* into painterly upheaval. So, naturally, his palette is by "ER" (hemorrhage red, venous blue, and lipid yellow), while the poses of his figures and his stabbing impasto are drawn straight from the psychiatric-ward handbook on painting as therapy.

Gastric Expressionism can be either anorexic or bulimic. Soutine's friend and patron Madeleine Castaing claimed that he worked best when he was ravenous, and refrained from consuming precisely the meat, fish, or fowl that he was painting. But what he denied his gullet, either from prudence or from paranoia, Soutine freely disgorged onto the canvas in a copious explosion of pigment—high-velocity projectile painting. Notoriously defensive and solitary, Soutine practiced the antacid principle of friendship, allowing people to come close to him only as pacifiers. His dealer, the saintly Léopold Zborowski, accompanied him to mineral spas at Vittel and Châtelguyon, where he drank sulfurously therapeutic fluids. His mistress in the late thirties, Gerda Groth, spent her first night with him warming his Vichy water after he had suffered a violent attack of ulcers; and Elie Faure, the Bordeaux critic who wrote with vivid sympathy about Soutine's painting, was also a physician, and treated the painter for his perpetually raging gut. Though Soutine died wearing the yellow star, on the run from the Nazis in Occupied France, it was a perforated ulcer that killed him.

THE Jewish Museum is the right place for a major Soutine show, and not just because of the truism that for many of us Judaism is, first of all, a

Soutine's "Hanging Turkey," circa 1925, and, opposite, "Head and Carcass of a Horse," circa 1923. An obsession with Rembrandt, an unstable stomach, and a ghoulish aestheticism made Soutine the most ferocious of the great European Expressionists.



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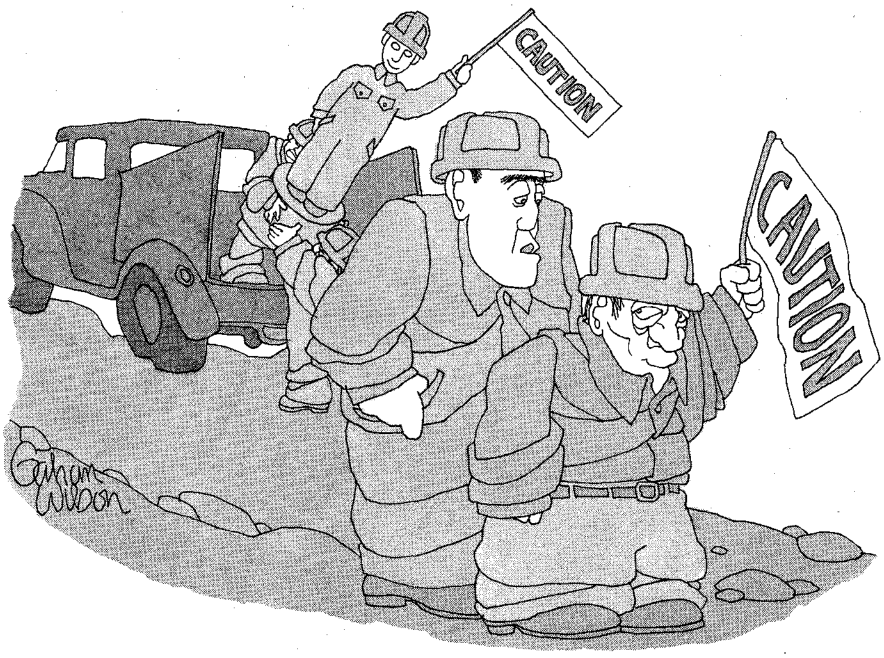
way of diet. Much of the recent literature on Soutine—well represented in the show's illuminating catalogue, by Norman Kleeblatt and Kenneth Silver—assumes that religious and ethnic agonizing were the primary source of the tortured quality of much of his painting, and of his compulsive morbidity as well. Inevitably, not all the contributors manage to avoid the woeful clichés of Judenschmerz: Donald Kuspit claims that "Soutine's shudder is a sublimation of the trauma of being born a lowly shtetl Jew and becoming an absurd Jew—not a real Jew—by becoming a painter." To which the only possible response is "Oy!" More reasonably, Kleeblatt and Silver ask us to think about Soutine in terms of three distinct critical responses to his throbbing brushwork and lurid color: he is the Necessary Wild Man, gratefully exploited by French critics as an antidote to the creeping classicism that they believed had congealed around modernist painting in the nineteen-twenties; he is the reinterpreter of the most painterly masters, particularly Rembrandt, Chardin, and Courbet; and, finally, he is the retrospectively adopted prophet of American gestural abstraction. The catalogue makes this triple case persuasively, but what reads well on the page misfires badly as an organizational principle for installation. Distributing paintings in the various galleries not chronologically but theoretically, so that each gallery can make a point, turns the exhibition into an obtrusively academic symposium, and precludes the innocent possibility of following the roller-coaster progress of Soutine's development. It may be that mere chronology seemed too paltry a concept around which to structure the show, but in Soutine's case chronology counts. It's of paramount importance, for example, to notice that he reversed the expected trajectory of a modernist painter, moving from explosive, almost Abstract Expressionism at the beginning of his career to a more resolved and tightly ordered figuration in the nineteen-thirties.

Beginning at the beginning would also have offered the Jewish Museum an opportunity for a critical reëxamination of some of the more simplistic myths that have gathered around Soutine's relationship with his Jewish background. Legend has him jumping straight out of a Belorussian mud puddle—the village of Smilovitchi—into Parisian bohemia, with his demons clinging to him like body lice. It's true that Smilovitchi was not exactly hospitable to a boy with artistic leanings, and that his father, a clothes-mender, would have preferred him to be a tailor. But when Soutine got locked in the basement it was not for buying watercolors (as the story goes); it was for stealing the money to obtain them. And, if he was energetically roughed up by the indignant sons of an old man he



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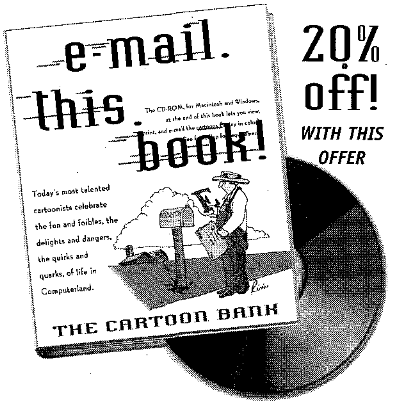
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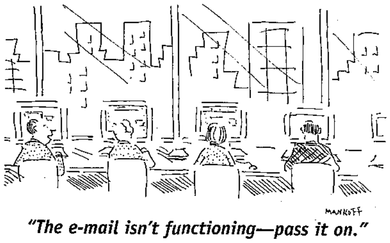

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had drawn, Soutine's mother turned the pain to profit by taking the assailants to court—thus extracting the fifteen rubles that got the young painter out of Smilovitchi and into the city of Minsk.

Despite the apparently unequivocal prohibitions of the Second Commandment, the world of the Jewish Pale was not monolithically inimical to art. Rather, it was culturally divided between the parochial milieu of the shtetls, where the impoverished population was fearful (with good reason) of the attentions of the outside world, and the much more heterogeneous culture of the great urban centers, like Minsk, Vilna, and Kovno. These cities had their own staunchly Orthodox citadels but were also alive with all manner of political and artistic experiment. The same world that produced Soutine, after all, nurtured an entire generation of Jewish modernists, including El Lissitzky, Jacques Lipchitz, and Marc Chagall, some of whom were to become his friends and champions. Far from being a complete loner, left to fend for himself in a hostile world, Soutine was succored by a long chain of mentors, companions, nurses, and selfless schleppers. In Minsk, as a sixteen-year-old, he lived with his sister, and developed a friendship with Michel Kikoïne, another aspiring artist. In 1910, the two of them moved to Vilna and enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts, and there, with the addition of another Lithuanian Jewish painter, Pinchus Krémègne, they became a trio. Kikoïne, who migrated to Paris ahead of Soutine, was on the platform at the Gare de l'Est when Soutine arrived, with money provided by his first benefactor, the Vilna physician Dr. Rafelkess.

If Soutine was not as solitary as has been supposed, he was certainly hard up, and when Dr. Rafelkess died, soon after Soutine's arrival in France, he was deprived of any kind of continuing financial support. But at La Ruche, a beehive of studios in the Fifteenth Arrondissement where artists from Russia and Eastern Europe lived on camp beds and kept the bugs at bay with dousings of kerosene, Soutine had a group of friends who did what they could to get his paintings shown and sold. His guardian angel was the Italian-Jewish artist Amedeo Modigliani, who intro-

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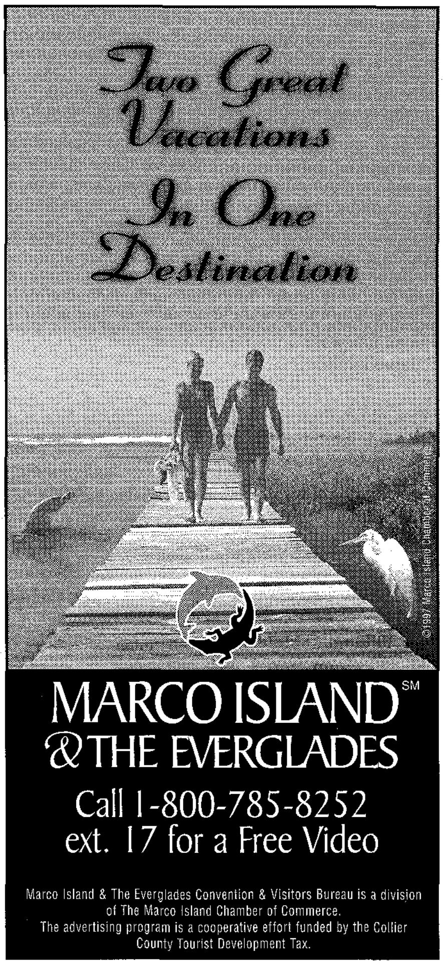
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duced him to his dealer, Zborowski, and took him to dinner at the Zborowskis', much to the horror of Anna Zborowski, who complained bitterly of Modigliani's reeking companion. Modigliani also did the most affecting portraits of his unlikely comrade, including one that was painted on a door of the Zborowskis' apartment. Thirty-five years ago, the Arts Council of Great Britain had the inspired idea of mounting simultaneous shows of the two artists in the Tate Gallery, where the hysterical distortions of one painter and the graceful sensualism of the other seemed providentially complementary. In fact, Modigliani's chiselled angularity and silky flatness did find their way into some of Soutine's more sympathetic portraits, like that of the elegant Madeleine Castaing. But that happened long after Modigliani's death, in 1920, of tubercular meningitis, which had been badly aggravated by his addiction to drink and drugs.

Modigliani's tragic end can only have intensified Soutine's aversion to the dangerous pleasures of Montparnasse, which alternately attracted and repelled him. So he painted the personifications of those pleasures—cooks, bellhops, gaudily dressed women, and ordinary bourgeois—as members of a fairground freak show, their faces mangled and pulpy, as if seen in a distorting mirror. This love-hate relationship with Paris endured for most of Soutine's life, and he obliged the cliché-mongers by developing a serious case of the Wandering Jew, moving restlessly from one rural retreat to another. In the spring of 1918, he had gone south for the first time with Modigliani, to Nice and Cagnes, to get out of the way of the German shells that were falling on Paris. When the Armistice came, Soutine moved again, this time to the Pyrenean village of Céret.

Céret was known as a painters' retreat, frequented by the likes of Braque and Picasso, but Soutine's experience of the place over the next few years was a long way from being a romp at summer camp for Cubists. He was too poor to live in the village, and his pictures were too scary, or too incomprehensible, to be bartered for food at the local cafés, like the works of other resident painters; he was taken in as a lodger by two old ladies who lived on the outskirts. And although much in Soutine's career ought to caution us against seeing him purely as the loner, the *bas-fonds* poverty and misanthropy of his time at Céret did draw from him Expressionist landscapes of dumbfoundingly original power.

In some of the pictures, the vestige of a landscape subject—a roofline of houses, an avenue of plane trees—is retained, albeit wrenched out of line. In others, the ground buckles, heaves, and writhes; solid forms balloon and blister, or implode back in on themselves, like matter sucked into the core of a twister. In the most radical pictures, like the Tate Gallery's "Landscape at Céret (The Storm)," observed phenomena dissolve completely into a pottage of pigment—the paint flung on with abandon, wet into wet, forming ropes, snakes, or flat ribbons of sharp color, while the whole surging surface is sometimes slashed over with welt-raising strokes of black. At this point, the paint itself has become Soutine's subject matter, and he has become the virtuoso handler of its protean personality—from free-running fluidity and brightly spattered speckles to glistening rivers of turbid glop.

WHO would have thought that this sort of thing would appeal to Dr. Albert Barnes, the omnivorous collector of Renoir, Cézanne, and Matisse? But it did. In December of 1922, Dr. Barnes, a tycoon from Philadelphia, who had made his fortune from a cure for conjunctivitis, was introduced to Soutine's paintings by the Paris dealer Paul Guillaume. Instantly smitten, Barnes bought spadefuls of them, at rock-bottom prices; the following year, he exhibited some of them in both Paris and Philadelphia, and in 1925 he devoted a chapter to Soutine in his book "The Art in Painting." Soutine now found his life and his place in Paris culture abruptly transformed: he went from scrofulous pariah to primitivist poster boy. His works were selling for thousands of francs, and he was repeatedly "discovered" by Paris critics in the tones of lordly wonder usually heard from colonial anthropologists encountering an especially charming but infantile species of savage.

Soutine, however, was not the kind of painter who relaxed into success. By the mid-twenties, he was regularly mutilating works that he regretted, and even some that he liked, on one occasion taking a pair of scissors to a painting right in front of the understandably dismayed buyer, who had just paid twelve thousand francs for it. He had an anal reluctance to let his work go which was of a piece with his feeling that the paintings were never quite finished—that they were part of an endless process of creation, destruction, and rebirth. And it was this sense of painting as a continuous process, rather than any sort of reverence for tradition, that, especially in the middle and late twenties, drew him to the art of the past—or, rather, to those masters he believed had treated painting as a perpetually incomplete creation. This impulse also led him to use already painted seventeenth-century canvases, so that his work would be deposited as the most recent layer of a dense palimpsest of artists' marks. And, although he produced extraordinary variations on works by the artists whom he judged to be the least academic and the most painterly in the canon, like Chardin and Courbet, it was with Rembrandt that he sustained his most abiding communion.

In Rembrandt, he correctly saw an artist passionately and materially involved with the texture of paint, one for whom, toward the end of his career, the experimental manipulation of pigment virtually became an end in itself. Soutine pored over the literature in an attempt to discover how Rembrandt mixed his paints; like Rembrandt, he used the stub end of his brush to scrape paint away; and he took four trips to Amsterdam to sit in front of "The Jewish Bride" and to buy pigment, as if Dutch paint (probably chemically identical to the paint he could obtain in Paris) would somehow bring him closer to the proto-patriarch of Expressionism. He became transfixed by Rembrandt's paintings of dead birds and butchered oxen, profound meditations on the relationship between sacrifice and redemption, on the vitality of paint and the mortality of bodies. In Amsterdam, Soutine must have seen the magnificent "Girl with Dead Peacocks"; this peculiar painting, which shows blood oozing from the strung game, was surely the source of the sequence of slaughtered animals and birds—rabbits, turkeys, and chickens—which Soutine painted in the middle and late twenties, and which make up the most stunning sequence in the Jewish Museum's exhibition.

In the Louvre, Soutine became obsessed by Rembrandt's great "Slaughtered Ox," of 1655, and he painted a number of versions of the eviscerated carcass, including the monumental crimson-and-purple painting from the Stedelijk Museum and the more outlandishly colored picture from Minneapolis in the current exhibition. In order to help replicate the working conditions of the original, Zborowski spent thirty-five hundred francs on a whole beef carcass from a butcher and hung it from a hook in Soutine's studio, in the Rue du Saint-Gothard, where it promptly turned into a convention center for swarms of enormous, hairy flies. The stench from the rotting beef also brought a visit from the health inspectors, who were greeted by Soutine's famous lofty epigram "Art is more important than sanitation." This being Paris, however, the considerate inspectors showed the painter how to preserve the cadaver by injecting it with formaldehyde. The only problem now was that the chemical dried the beef out. To get that just-butchered look he was after, Soutine went with Paulette Jourdain—a girl to whom Zborowski had assigned the unenviable job of taking care of him—to slaughterhouses to procure buckets of blood, so that he could drench the hanging carcass with it.

Soutine's need for sanguine brightness suggests that he may have known about another important Baroque work of art, by the three Carraccis—Annibale, Agostino, and Ludovico—in which the painters stand at a butcher's stall proudly displaying the *carne viva*, and which proclaimed, symbolically, their collective hostility to the "dry goods" of the academic tradition. Perhaps, too, there was an element of ghoulish aestheticism in Soutine's loving exploration of sinews and innards, not unlike the creepy pleasure taken by Proust when he bullied butchers' boys

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into initiating him at first hand into the mysteries of the slaughterhouse.

ULTIMATELY, though, it was the sacred, not the profane, that drew Soutine, as it had Rembrandt, to butchery. He would have been alert to the allusions to martyrdom, and even to the Passion, embodied in the "Slaughtered Ox," but at the same time his Orthodox upbringing must have brought home to him the crucial distinctions between Jewish and Christian traditions of sacrificial atonement. Jewish oblations in the period of the Temple were rituals of propitiation, in which the guilt for transgression was displaced onto the slaughtered animal, and these rituals gradually evolved into such symbolic expressions as the shank bone on the Seder plate, or into simple acts of atoning prayer. So the fundamental Christian drama of incarnation and crucifixion—restoring the burden of sacrificial atonement to the body of the man-God—was bound to be repugnant to the Jewish tradition, which also equated exposure to the dead with uncleanness.

Soutine's series of hanging birds and butchered beasts is the painter at his most adamantly unkosher. The laws of kashruth prescribe the complete purging of blood from the body of the slaughtered animal, but Soutine's sides of beef and skinned horses are laved in it, and his birds are suspended the wrong way for draining—bills upward, feet down. The animals are, if anything, more heavily laden with sacrificial meaning than Rembrandt's martyred meat. It's also clear that Soutine understood, and doubtless identified with, the element of self-portraiture in Rembrandt's paintings, in which the plumage of birds or the interiors of oxen are treated to the most spectacular brushwork. Soutine, though, does something devilishly pathetic with the hanging carcasses, by giving them the unmistakable twitch of life: the turkey bills appear to have been choked in mid-gobble; the skate loses its innards through a gutter's gash even as it appears to glide over a teakettle; the defunct hare appears to sprint endlessly over the green shutters.

Inevitably, of course, these images, relentlessly repeated, have been associated with the massacres to come, as if Soutine were a prophet of Aktionskommandos as well as of Action painting. But there is no reason to suppose that he meant his "game pieces," painted in the twenties, to be a commentary on the fatefulness of any Jewish history except his own. During the thirties, as he was becoming a fixture on the art scene in both Europe and America, Soutine was ever more restless in his movements. Even before Zborowski's death, in 1932, he was adopted by Marcellin and Madeleine Castaing as their pet project. They set him up in a studio in their country house, near Chartres, from which he (or, rather, an assistant) scoured the local villages looking for picturesque poultry or peasants to pose for his increasingly dissonant variations on favorite museum pieces. Not one of these was more willfully perverse than his picture of a dumpy barnyard matron up to her knees in muddy water—his rendition of Rembrandt's exquisitely beautiful "Woman Bathing."

Rembrandt's painting is all sensual liquidity and delicate reflection; Soutine's "Woman Entering the Water" is solid, earthy, and impacted. And in Soutine's last years, although he was only in his forties, much of his whirling-dervish energy ebbed away; his paintings became more laboriously attentive to their museum prototypes, the brushwork less manic, the forms more legibly described.

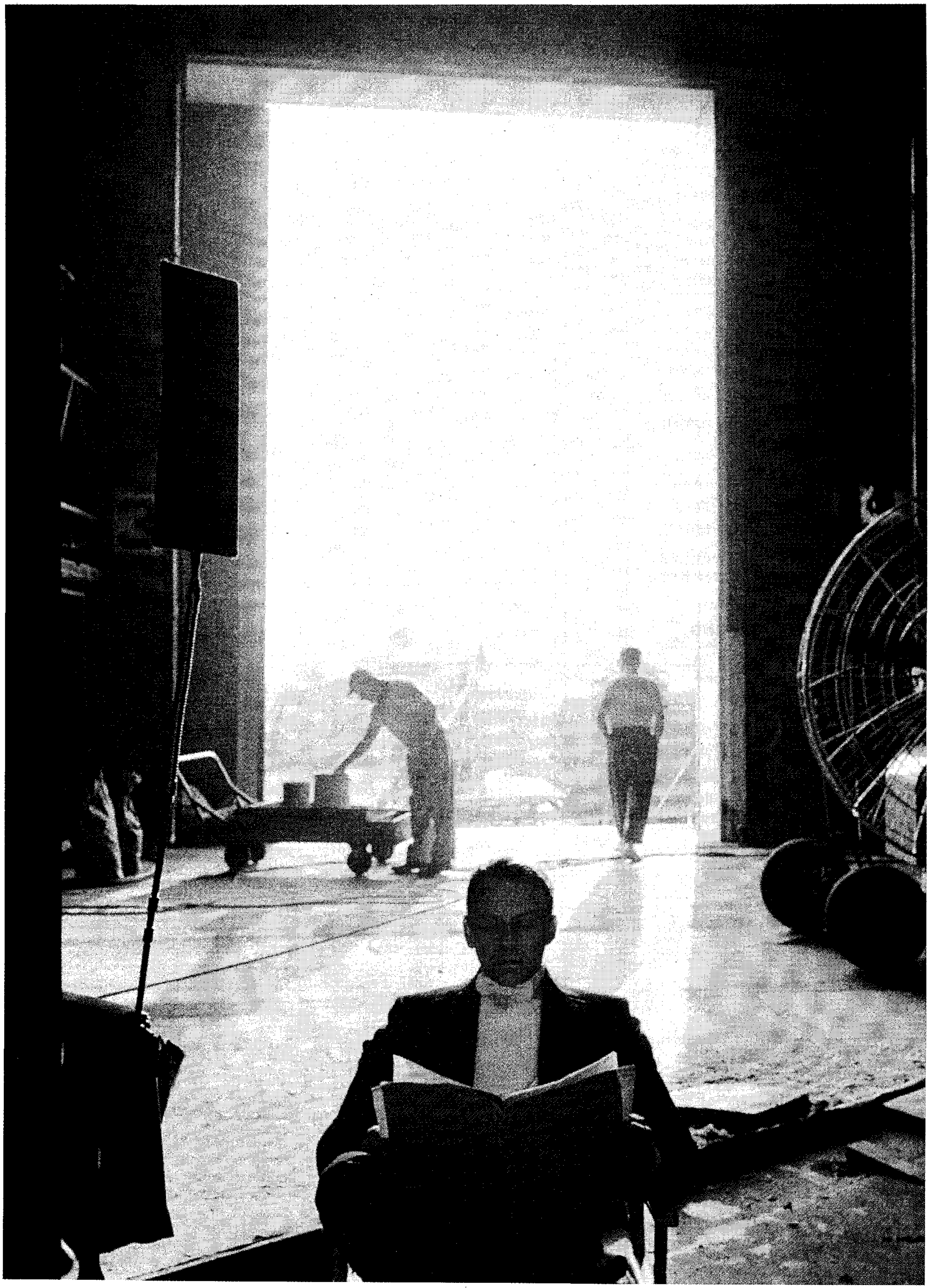
Perhaps he was, at last, becoming accustomed to being taken care of. In 1937, he met the twenty-three-year-old German-Jewish refugee Gerda Groth, whom he nicknamed Mademoiselle Garde in recognition of her custodial devotion. Under her watchful ministrations, Soutine even began to eat previously forbidden foods, like eggs, fish, and meat. Live animals replaced dead ones in his pictures; portraits became more sculpturally modelled and less grotesquely rubbery; mothers and children were tenderly depicted. The claustrophobic intensity of the Céret landscapes now opened up to scenes of light and space; his "Windy Day, Auxerre," with its smoke-wisp clouds, actually looks back, without hostility, to the Impressionists!

As the war approached, one might have expected his anxiety level to rise. But the reverse seems to have been true. Garde, from whom he was separated in 1940 by her internment, reports an odd fatalism in his predictions for their future. Even odder was Soutine's pleasure in reading the work of the fiercely reactionary, anti-Semitic Charles Maurras, and the fact that some of his warmest admirers—like Waldemar George, who boasted of his interview with Mussolini, and Pierre Drieu La Rochelle—were enthusiasts of Fascism.

In November of 1940, Soutine took up with Marie-Berthe Aurenche, the divorced wife of Max Ernst, who was a devout Catholic, and whose mother claimed to trace her lineage to Louis XVIII; she looked forward to her daughter's becoming Queen of France, once the detested Third Republic had been done away with. Aurenche was with Soutine in the château town of Chinon when his ulcer perforated, and after he died she made sure that a cross was put on his tomb in the cemetery of Montparnasse.

Soutine had apparently declined an invitation to seek asylum in America, but his troubled ghost certainly made the crossing over the Atlantic. He had already been noticed in the thirties by the likes of Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb; it was not until 1950, however, that an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art officially canonized him as the patriarch of gestural abstraction—the inspiration for the vehemence of both Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. Only Clement Greenberg, while admiring Soutine's painterly bravura, confessed himself uneasy with the uncontrolled onrush of his emotions. Soutine was not, as Norman Kleeblatt astutely observes, "Greenberg's kind of Jew." In fact, Greenberg singled out paintings at the furthest remove from Soutine's feverishness, like the densely picturesque "House at Oisème," as his most completely realized works of art.

But to see, even in the later Soutine, a painter on the road to controlled self-mastery is wishful thinking. The Soutine who fully deserves his place among the masters of modern painting is the Soutine for whom painting was an ecstatic frenzy, a kind of trance in which unthought-of prodigies of brushed color might be liberated. As his pictures leap off the walls and set about attacking visitors to the show, it's plainer than ever that the painter whose first name means "life" and whose career was spent peering at death still refuses to settle down and behave himself. ♦



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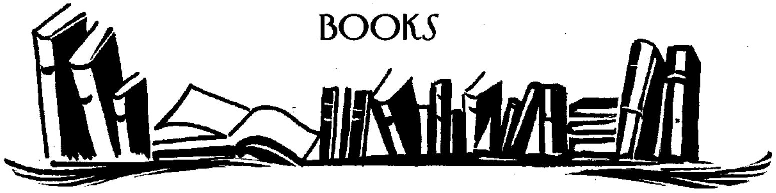
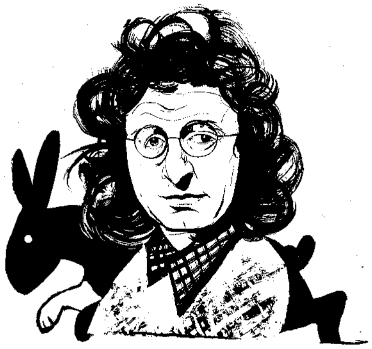


GENDER BENDERS

Naughtiness in the post-Communist world.

BY JOHN UPDIKE



Péter Esterházy

RICCARDO VECCHIO

NAUGHTINESS is dissidence, as the writers of Eastern Europe well knew during their forty years of being tied to Mother Russia's apron strings. The heroes of Milan Kundera, Josef Skvorecky, and Tadeusz Konwicki, among others, found relief from the imposed politics of Soviet Communism in the self-inflicted politics of sex; defiance found expression in anarchic, dissipated lives. An American version of this mood survives in Philip Roth's "The Prague Orgy," a dishevelled and lewd postscript to the Zuckerman trilogy. "You like orgies, you come with me," Zuckerman is told. "Since the Russians, the best orgies in Europe are in Czechoslovakia. Less liberty, better fucks."

But what now, in a post-Communist world with all the usual capitalist troubles, including the commercialism of sex and the anomie of surfeit? Can naughtiness have lost its potent point? Péter Esterházy, whose "A Little Hungarian Pornography" was published in Budapest in 1983, and whose "Book of Hrabal" came out there in 1990, as Communism crumbled, continues to anatomize—ruthlessly, obsessively—gender relations, in a sequence of ninety-seven brief chapters published under the title "She Loves Me" (translated from the Hungarian by Judith Sollosy; Northwestern; $26.95). The first chapter, in its entirety, reads, "There's this woman. She loves me." The next chapter begins, "There's this woman. She hates me." It is not necessarily the same woman. The second woman calls the narrator Shadow, because he never leaves her side. She makes shadow pictures of a bunny rabbit or an eagle on a convenient wall, and has a father who "hates my guts and refers to my work as shadow play." Esterházy's prose is jumpy, allusive, and slangy; we feel that something is being lost in translation, though Sollosy gamely comes up with a lot of tricksome English. In Chapter 6, we read:

> This is why, when I spot her in a place fit for kissing—and there is hardly any place left these days that private or social consensus, virtue or sobriety, has put under interdiction—I up and run at her, Speedy Gonzales, that's me! and *wham!*, I slam into her, we slam into each other with no time to spare, because I know only too well that otherwise this foul emptiness, this putrid absence of absence will overwhelm me, this fetid nothingness, this pestiferous air which, and this has been known to happen, makes me retch—snot and saliva running together—though this, too, is a form of *intercourse*, I guess.

I guess. The translator seems to be hurrying to keep up with the writer, and the writer with his racing mind. The input arrives too fast for him or the reader to sort out. Few of the episodes have time to build into anything like what we might call a picture of a relationship. The woman in Chapter 63, for instance, "hates the whole world, and she'll do you a bad turn when she can. She won't relay messages, or she makes up false ones." She oversalts the food and "repeatedly denies having an orgasm, though at times the saliva runs down the corner of her lips." She glues together pages of the narrator's favorite books (Borges is named), so that each becomes "like an awkward piece of brick or a secret puzzle," and he "would cease to be a person, if only she did not hate me quite so faithfully." Calvino is also invoked; the heroine of Chapter 74 ("She speaks Greek. She's got freckles"), it is asserted, "loves Italo Calvino and oatflakes." But Calvino, in his books of many small chapters, like "Invisible Cities" and "Mr. Palomar," generated a strong sense of patterned arrangement, of cumulative movement toward a horizon of useful philosophical statement. Esterházy begins and ends on the same pitch, frenetic and enigmatic, and leaves the reader feeling excluded from ninety-seven private jokes.

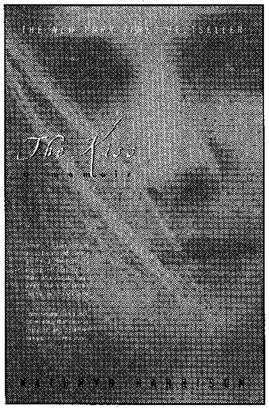
Still, there is vividness, an electric crackle. The sentences are active and concrete. Physical details leap from the murk of emotional ambivalence. The women are characterized by bad breath, eyebrows "like some thicket," gout, dwarfishness, obesity, rippling thighs, blotchiness, chapped lips, possible dentures, inflamed gums, falling hair, and big bottoms. Their pubic hair receives close inspection: of the heroine of Chapter 82 we are told, "Her pubic hair is red, light red, a stone-washed pink.... From very close up, at follicle-distance, it's like a forest of larch trees (*Larix decidua*)." Our noses are energetically rubbed in love's physicality. The narrator, in Chapter 17, is afflicted with "some sort of foul rash." His lady friend, far from daunted,

> watched ecstatically as the rashes burst open or developed into minuscule boils with yellow centres that let off a sulphurous, decaying stench. She was crazy about them, she fondled and kissed them, she smeared herself with their juices. It was horrible. I counted for nothing, only my boils.

C'est la vie, c'est l'amour. The book's over-all mood of amused cynicism, of wry psychologizing, feels very European. Americans pull a longer face before the conundrums of sex—its attempt "to pass somehow, no matter how, beyond the endless expanse of the finite," its rhythm of self-abandonment and self-absorption, its kinky stimulations and postcoital disenchantment. Esterházy, in a chapter that begins, "There's this woman. She ha... (loves me),'' describes erotic fire as "that certain gleaming sparkle between repulsion and ecstasy." Trained as a mathematician, he takes an inventory of the wrinkles in gender relations. As the book wears on, the protean couple at its heart feel more and more married. In Chapter 91, they have been together for twenty-eight years and their son is queer. In Chapter 95, "She loves me, except she's as scared of my prick as the devil is of incense"; in her fright she jumps on the table and ruins a dinner party they are giving. In the last chapter, "She loves me less and less, and wants me more and more." They breathe the same air. The hero doesn't have a toothbrush or a name to call his own. Thus ends, in a no man's land, Esterházy's willy-nilly tour of the craggy, chasmed terrain where the sexes manage to meet. ♦

(Advt.)

Every life is composed of defining events. We cling to memories of these events in order to experience again and again the joy they afforded us—or to learn and to heal from the deep wounds they opened.



Kathryn Harrison's ***THE KISS*** is a candid and controversial memoir of her obsessive love affair at the age of twenty with her estranged father. Harrison is an author whose novels have twice been selected as *New York Times* Notable Books. Now she has taken this dark episode in her life and imbued it with a haunting, unexpected beauty. Writing this book was an act of tremendous courage by a literary artist who succumbed to a terrible seduction and survived breaking society's most powerful taboo.

More in the realm of joy is ***FOR THE RECORD***, a series of oral histories of rock music's most important acts and epochs, edited by **Dave Marsh**. In separate volumes, the advancements, accomplishments, and legacies of the superstars of sixties and seventies popular music are celebrated in the words of the artists themselves, and in the recollections of the friends and associates who were standing close by throughout. ***SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE***—who successfully blended R&B with an emerging psychedelic sound—the musical innovations of ***GEORGE CLINTON AND P-FUNK***, and the soulful lives and music of the ***WOMEN OF MOTOWN*** are explored in great depth and detail. This was the popular culture in an era of profound change in our country; and the music of these times reflected—and often influenced—that change. The history of rock 'n' roll is, in many ways, the contemporary history of the United States.

We'll talk again.

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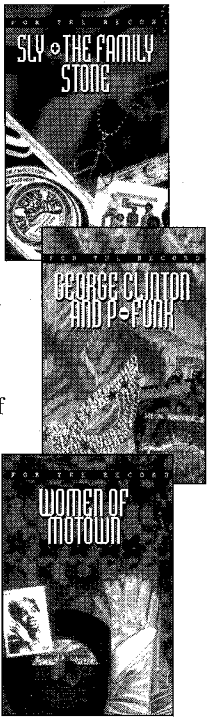

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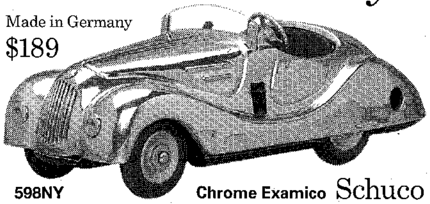

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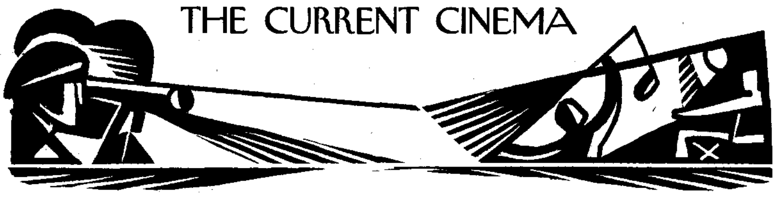


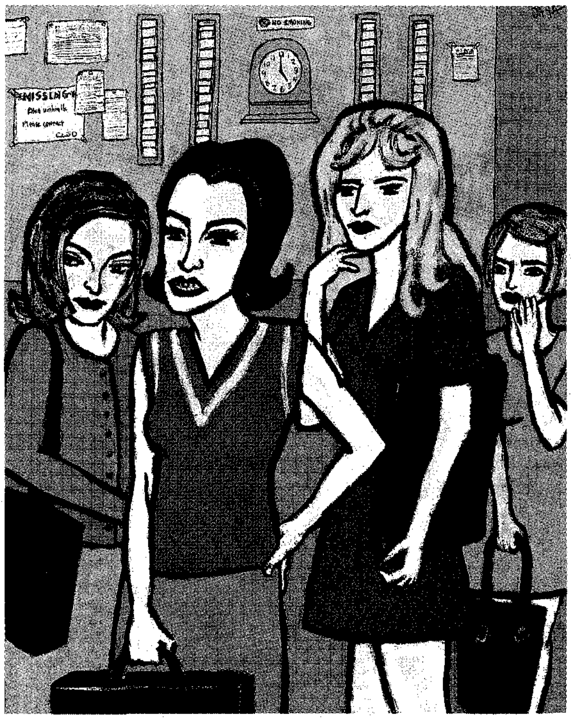
THE CURRENT CINEMA

WHERE THE GIRLS ARE

Desperately seeking screen heroines.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

WHAT do women want in a female heroine? We know what we're supposed to want: gorgeous genre-busters like Thelma and Louise. But such intrepid types are not that easy to come by, and they're not always convincing; your average neglected housewife is still less likely to shoot 'em up than to invite everyone into the kitchen for a conciliatory cup of tea. And while we're sitting around the table exploring our feelings, let's discuss the baffling array of screen heroines these days. Is there any woman out there whom we can readily identify with? How about the seventeenth-century Italian painter Artemisia Gentileschi, who is known as much for the rape trial that swirled around her as for the bloody realism of her celebrated painting "Judith Beheading Holofernes"? The controversial and confused new film "Artemisia," written and directed by Agnès Merlet, makes a sexy love story out of Artemisia's relationship with her teacher (and accused rapist) Agostino Tassi, in which art lessons become a rarefied form of foreplay. The film, starring the fetching Valentina Cervi, has Tassi telling his young pupil to "let yourself go," as though he had memorized Masters and Johnson, and it has Artemisia not only expertly guiding him in bed but insisting that he gave her pleasure when he raped her. (Gloria Steinem, for one, couldn't decide whether the film was friend or foe; she agreed to participate in its première, only to pass around a two-page statement of historical facts that had been distorted in the film.) Or do we secretly prefer someone who breaks down in the face of passion? The central character in the recent French film "Post Coitum" (written and directed by Brigitte Roüan, who also stars in it) is a book editor, wife, and mother who disintegrates when her young engineer boyfriend breaks off their affair. There's something mordantly fascinating about watching a tasteful woman reduced to a desperate state—going as far as to leave a mound of feces in front of her lover's door. But are we to admire the character for her abandon or to think of her as a deluded, Bess Myerson-like creature? And how is this romanticized idea of a woman rendered helpless by erotic need any less retrograde than the thinking behind "Carnal Knowledge"? Perhaps the protagonist of "Under the Skin," a British film written and directed by Carine Adler, comes closer to represent-



Temps killing time: Toni Collette, Parker Posey, Lisa Kudrow, and Alanna Ubach in "Clockwatchers."

JAYA MICELI

ing a late-twentieth-century type: played with riveting naturalism by Samantha Morton, this nineteen-year-old abruptly leaves her boyfriend of two years, moves into a shabby room, and turns to anonymous sex following her mother's death. It's her form of scummy solace, and yet it's never clear why she retreats into picking up random men the way another woman might retreat into late-night reruns. The film, like a lot of movies with interestingly "female" sensibilities, is essentially inchoate; it's both mysteriously bashful about its characters' motivations and emotionally overwrought.

So it was with particular gratitude that I fell upon "Clockwatchers," a sly fable about women and the workplace. Directed and co-written by Jill Sprecher (with her sister, Karen Sprecher), the film is original and lucid, starting with its idea of a heroine: she's a quiet young woman who lives with her father and keeps her hopes to herself while riding the bus to work every day. Iris (Toni Collette) is the newest temp at Global Credit, a large, efficiently run company that boasts piped-in music, pale-green walls, and an office-supply manager with a shoe fetish whose rubber-band ball is his prized possession. On her first day, Iris is kept waiting for two hours before she's shown to a desk; she sits humbly in a chair against a wall while chattering secretaries go by, oblivious of her presence. The scene, like the rest of the movie, has been designed and shot with a dreamy hyperrealism, and Collette, who was so good in "Muriel's Wedding," is mesmerizing in this shy, watchful role; she's free of the "Look at me!" quality that afflicts so many young actresses. Her Iris speaks in a wispy, deferential voice, and when she makes typing errors on some invoice forms that she has been warned are "very expensive," she crumples up the forms and hides them in her bag. She is soon befriended by three other temps: Margaret (Parker Posey), the wild card of the group, who's given to flippant comments ("Ever want to make something disappear? Just file it"); Paula (Lisa Kudrow), a pretty blonde, who has a stage name and seems to be preparing for an acting career that never happens; and Jane (Alanna Ubach), an obsessive-compulsive who can't mail a letter without checking the mail chute several times but is the only one of the women to sport a diamond engagement ring.

The four women bond over spicy buffalo wings at Wednesday-night Happy Hour, try on lipstick together (Margaret tells Iris, "You've got lips that say 'Hi, I'm here. I want to be heard' "), and fulminate about their lowly position. Iris is filling in for someone named Louise; in between Xeroxing, learning how to use the "Urgent" ink stamp correctly, and studying the photo cubes on Louise's desk, she watches the clock. Paula (played by Kudrow with forlorn pinup-girl narcissism) keeps busy by giving herself a French manicure with white-out; Jane obsessively pops the bubbles on packing plastic; and Margaret, who longs for a permanent job—"a desk by a window and a decent chair"—carves her name into her desk. "We were all just killing time," Iris observes, "waiting for something to happen." Something eventually does happen, which is that things start disappearing from people's offices—a crystal paperweight, a coffee mug, a gold cigarette lighter—and the foursome are eyed as possible suspects. Their friendship begins to unravel under the strain, and the quartet disbands after Margaret is unceremoniously fired, kicking and screaming all the way. "Is anyone going to stick up for me?" she yells as she's hustled out by a security guard. "Is anyone going to say anything?"

"Clockwatchers" has a rare sort of reflective energy; there's no real plot development, yet it bustles with complex psychological movement. It engages us through its quirky point of view—a mixture of "Harriet the Spy" and "Mary Tyler Moore," with a little Kafka thrown in. Its inertness may confound viewers looking for a kooky, indie version of "9 to 5"; it also lacks the in-your-face air of contemporaneity that we've come to expect from young filmmakers. In fact, the film, which is set in the present, could easily be about the twenty-somethings of a generation ago. In its own understated, anti-ideological way, the movie is a true feminist comment on how little has changed and how difficult it is for young women of middling aspiration to cobble their identities together in a vast, impersonal world. "I feel like I could vanish," Margaret says. "And no one would even know, not for weeks." Iris, who sees to it, in her own diffident fashion, that Margaret will not vanish, is the most appealing heroine I've come across in a long time. ◆

EDITORS' NOTE: The Cryptic Crossword will return next week.

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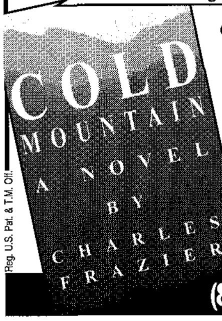

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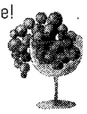

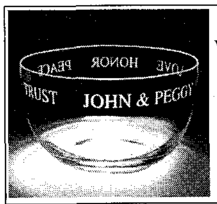

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

FIRST ACTION HERO

BY FRANK GANNON

Maybe as some kind of compensatory gesture, the movies have also lately given us the President as cartoonish action hero.—*Time.*

THE time is now. Things are exactly the way they were on CNN this morning. The Republicans want to give tax breaks to people who give them money, and the Democrats disagree. Blah blah blah.

Then it happens. The President is in St. Louis. He's in his limo. He's been drinking coffee. He has to go to the bathroom. They stop at a McDonald's. The President is followed inside by his Secret Service guys. They stand next to him while he goes. He says, "Do you mind?" They step outside. They're not supposed to do that, but, hey, he's the President. They do what he says.

The President is almost finished draining the lizard. Suddenly, two terrorists slide in through the window. They do it so smoothly that the President doesn't even notice. One opens the door to a stall, the other grabs the President. In an instant, they have him chloro'd, duct-taped, and out the window. This takes a few seconds. These guys are pros.

We see the Secret Service guys. They look at each other like, "Why does the President take so long?" They knock. Nothing. They give each other the "uh-oh" look. They kick in the door, size up the situation. They see that the President is gone. They get on the horn and say, "Red alert, get the word back to H.Q." Everybody goes into "Serious Big Deal" mode.

The terrorist scumbags have taken the President to a private airfield. They pack him on a plane. They take the duct tape off his mouth. They say, "Are you O.K.?" He nods. They say, "Would you like the fish or the chicken, ha ha ha." The President doesn't think it's so funny. He says, "I had chicken for breakfast." He's cool. He's got it together. They slap him. The President has a look that says, This is the President, all right? The President of the United States. I'm not going to put up with this crap forever. They re-tape him.

Constant news reports. Kids getting ready for school with the story on TV. The moms and dads aren't paying attention to their kids, because this story is really shocking. At bars everywhere, the alcoholics aren't getting drunk fast enough. Americans are shocked and appalled. This shakes something deep within them.

A guy comes on TV and delivers an editorial about how in America the leader of the free world is supposed to be able to take a leak without some monkey coming in through the window and duct-taping him. This would be great if we could get Walter Cronkite to do it, which I think we can.

It turns out they're taking the President to a Shaolin monastery. They dump him there. The President wakes up in a cave. It's really art-directed in there: orange light flickering on walls, that sort of thing. A young Eurasian woman comes into the cave. The woman talks to the President very tenderly. She awakens something in him that has long been dormant. She talks of life, love, and the beauty of nature and small animals. He begins to relate. He has been way too controlled, because of his confining, uptight job. She touches him. He hears words he has wanted to hear since he was a child with a small animal. She takes the duct tape off his mouth. He has a lot to say. He tells her about how hard it is when you have to get people to vote for you just to keep your job and feed your family. He tells her that he really tries to be good.

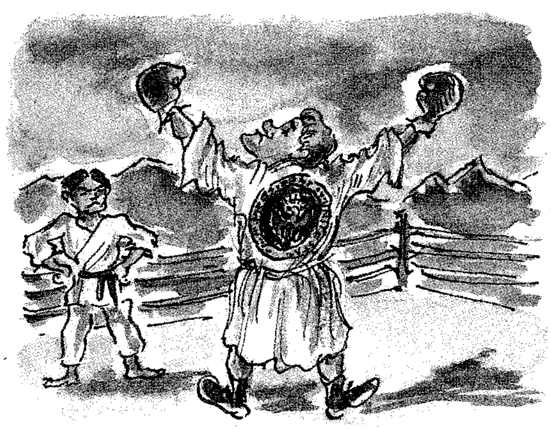
The woman's name is Deborah Kerr. She was named by missionaries. They share a laugh. Even though he's the President of the United States and she's a Eurasian woman in a cave, a bond is formed.

It turns out that the President has been brought there for a big kung fu/American boxing/deadly art of Li Po tournament. The President has been entered. This is a very serious tournament. Second place: slow death. First place: a toaster oven and fast death.

The finals are the President against a big Eurasian guy. The Eurasian guy, we learn, hates Americans, because in the American films he's seen Eurasian guys always own 7-Eleven stores, which he considers degrading. The final battle begins with the sun setting in an art-directed way. Suddenly, American helicopters appear over the mountain. They start shooting. The Shaolin monks return fire with automatic weapons and anti-aircraft guns. Even though there are bullets everywhere, the President runs out, hoists the wounded Eurasian guy on his shoulders, and carries him to a chopper. The Eurasian guy wakes up as they fly off. The President says, "Let's stop at a 7-Eleven." They share a tough-guy moment.

Helicopter lands. Washington, D.C. Wife and kids. All is well. The President makes the Eurasian guy an intern. Blah blah blah.

It's summer. The kids are out of school. Everybody's happy. ♦



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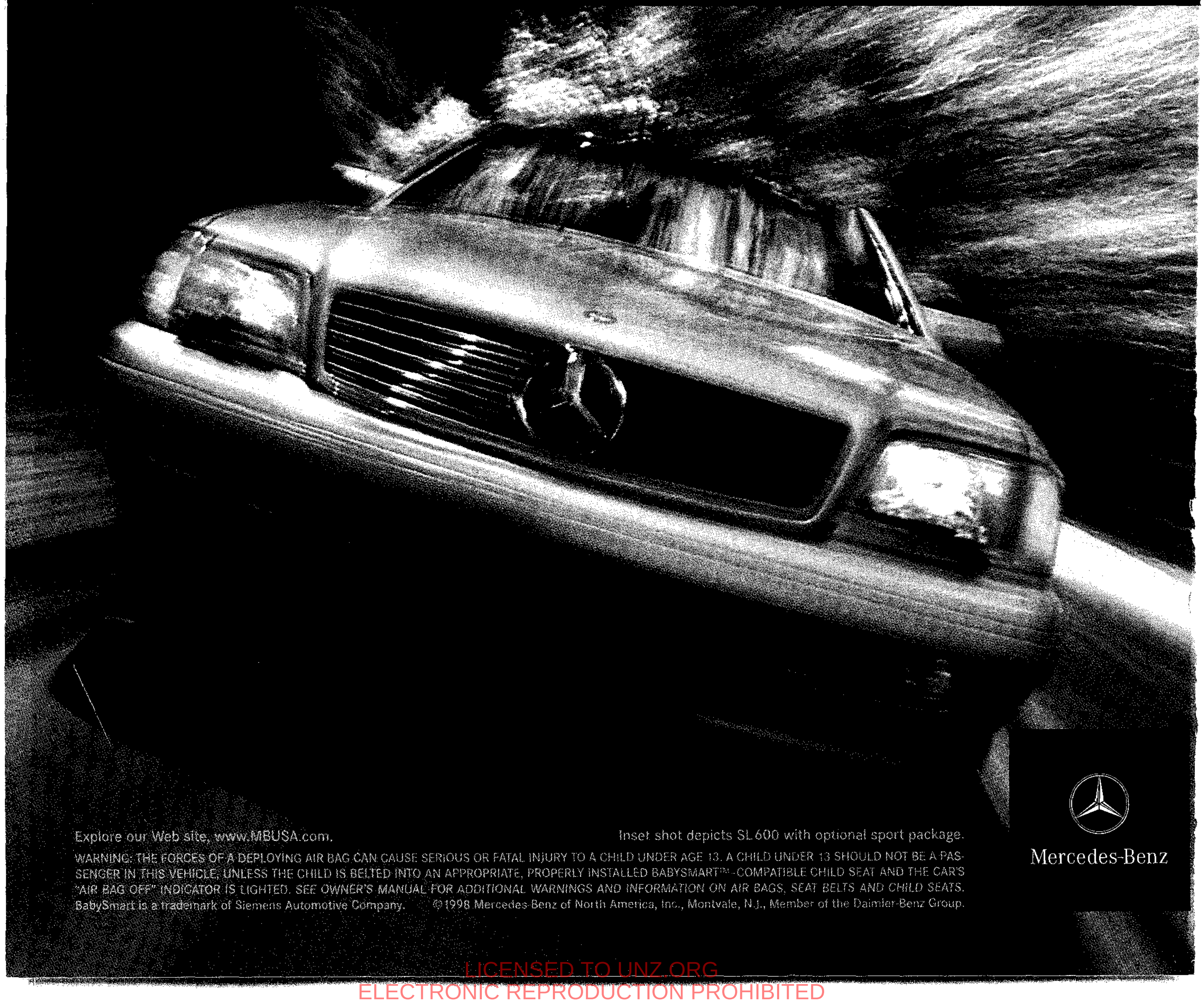

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